













MEDIEVAL INDIAN LITERATURE

An Anthology

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VOLUME FOUR

Selections

## TITLES IN THIS SERIES

### Medieval Indian Literature: An Anthology

VOLUME 1    *Surveys and Selections (Assamese - Dogri)*

VOLUME 2    *Selections (Gujarati - Konkani)*

VOLUME 3    *Selections (Maithili - Punjabi)*

VOLUME 4    *Selections (Rajasthani - Urdu)*

MEDIEVAL INDIAN LITERATURE

An Anthology

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VOLUME FOUR

# Selections



SAHITYA AKADEMI

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# Guide to Users

## PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLITERATION

The following system of transliteration approved by Sahitya Akademi for *Modern Indian Literature* is adopted for *Medieval Indian Literature* too.

### SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

#### *Vowels*

a	i	u	e	o	ai
ā	ī	ū	ē	ō	au

#### *Consonants*

	Velar	Palatal	Retroflex	Alveolar	Dental	Labial
<b>Stops</b>						
1. vl.	k	c	ṭ	t'	t	p
2. vl. asp.	kh	ch	ṭh		th	ph
3. vd.	g	j	ḍ		d	b
4. vd. asp.	gh	jh	ḍh		dh	bh
<b>Nasals</b>	ṇ	ñ	ṇ	n'	n'	m
<b>Trill</b>					r	
<b>Flap</b>					r	
<b>Laterals</b>			l	l		
<b>Fricatives</b>	h	ś'	ṣ	s		
<b>Continuants</b>	y	ḷ				

v  
Labio-dental

### PHONETIC SYMBOLS VS. CONVENTIONAL SPELLING

1. It may be noted that wherever the pronunciation of medieval proper nouns (names of major authors and titles of important works) is indicated in parentheses, the symbols in the above chart are used with diacritics. However, in running matter as a rule, conventional spellings familiar to the average reader are

## GUIDE TO USERS

retained to provide for easy reading.

2. Conventional spellings corresponding to some of these phonetic symbols are given below:

Phonetic Symbols		Conventional Spelling
ī	:	i/ee
ū	:	u/oo
s'	:	s/sh
ṣ	:	sh
t'	:	t
ṭ	:	t
t	:	t/th
v	:	b/v/w

3. Variant spellings are sometimes found even within conventional system.
4. The pronunciation of the same word may at times be represented by different conventional spellings in Roman script when it occurs in the contexts of different Indian languages. These may indicate variations in pronunciation.
5. The pronunciation of a word of Sanskrit origin may always be the same in a modern Indian language as in the original Sanskrit.
6. In loan-words from Persian or Arabic or Portuguese, slight modifications in the system of transliteration may be necessary to indicate the exact pronunciation.





# Selections

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# Selections

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# Medieval Rajasthani Literature

## Four Stanzas

HEMCHANDRA

HEMCHANDRA (Hemcandra, 1088-1172) was a learned scholar. Some time about the middle of the 12th century he wrote his *Vyakaran*, in which he has given, as examples to illustrate his text, verses of Prakrit and Apabhramsh drawn from stray and little known anthologies of the time besides a goodly number of his own compositions.

Apabhramsh was the language of literature of the north-western regions including Rajasthan and Gujarat—which derived from Sanskrit and Prakrit, and which in time evolved into what has been called old western Rajasthani or Maru Bhasha.

The four verses selected here are, believed to be Hemchandra's own composition.

1

Worthless and totally wasted indeed  
has been the life of the one  
whose sword never struck a blow  
on to the head of some worthy foe;  
who never had any spirited horses to ride;  
nor any beautiful woman  
to cling to his neck in loving embrace.

2

What's the use of begetting a son,  
and what harm can come from losing him  
if his father's lands are trampled upon  
with impunity by other men?

3

If the enemy hordes are fleeing the field,  
O friend, it is owing to my husband's prowess;

but if it is our own men who are running away,  
he surely has been killed in the combat.

## 4

O sister, 'tis well that my husband  
was killed in the battle;  
for had he fled the field  
and come running home alive,  
I'd have felt humiliated  
and ashamed of myself  
amongst the young women of my age.

*Hemchandra ra Duha*, 11th-12th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

### Couplets of Dhola Maru

#### KALLOL

Nothing much is known about the author of these *Duhas* except that his name was Kallol, which we find mentioned in one of the couplets of Kushal Labh's "Dhola Marvani ri Chaupai". Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that the author of these *Duhas* is no one poet in particular, but the "folk" in general collectively. But it is difficult to agree with them; for even a casual reading through these *Duhas* should be enough to convince one that the composition couldn't possibly have come from the "folk" at random; there must have been one particular poet who wrote them. And there seems to be no reason why we shouldn't accept Kallol to have been the author.

*Dhola Maru ra Duha* (Dholā Māru rā Dūhā) is a beautiful love-story composed some time in the beginning of the 12th century. The word *Dhola* (for a romantic hero) occurs at a few places in Hemchandra's *Apabhramsh Vyakaran*. Some scholars assign it to the 13th century; others to circa 1440. But this much is certain that in 1560 Kushal Labh, a Jain scholar of Jaisalmer, at the instance of Rawal Har Raj, the ruler of that principality, collected these *Duhas* and arranged them in proper order in accordance with the sequence of the story, filling the gaps with verses (*Chaupais* — quite different from *Duhas*) of his own composition wherever he thought it necessary. Kushal Labh mentions explicitly in his work that "the *Duhas* are very old". I am inclined to believe that "*Dhola Maru ra Duha*" is a composition of the early 12th century, quite well-known and popular in Hemchandra's time certainly by the time he was getting on in years.

The story is simple: Dhola and Marvani are married when they are but mere children. Dhola is later married to another girl, Malvani, and lives happily with

her. Marvani grows up to be a beautiful young woman, and, after seeing Dhola in a dream, pines for him night and day. She sends a message to him through some minstrels; Dhola's heart is filled with an intense longing for her. And at long last comes their happy reunion.

In the couplets given below, the readers will sample the masterly handling by the poet of the primary human emotions of universal appeal.

1

Marvani Pines for Dhola

O, look at that cloud  
that has come up and filled the skies;  
even so do fill my heart  
the thoughts of my beloved.  
But while the cloud  
sheds its drops  
only during its season,  
mine eyes shed theirs at all times,  
all the year round.

O you, free winds,  
blow in from the direction of the country  
where my beloved dwells.  
Coming thence  
you shall have brushed against his body;  
your caressing zephyrs then,  
I will regard as a gift worth millions.

2

Marvani's Message

She draws some lines on the ground with her toe,  
her bosom is drenched with tears;  
and sobbing all disconsolate  
she gives her message to the traveller.  
If I do not hear of your coming  
by the vernal month of Phagun,  
O my beloved husband,



on the pretext of dancing the *chanchari*  
around the bonfire of Holi  
I shall leap into its flames  
to end my wretched life.

## 3

## The Messengers Speak to Dhola

The lunar lily's abode  
is in the waters of the pools  
while the moon hangs out there  
high in the sky;  
and yet the great distance between them  
matters not at all.  
For lovers truly reside  
in each other's hearts, and thence surely  
nothing can really ever keep them apart.

Your wife's face is as lovely as the moon;  
her gait, as lovely as that of the swans;  
soft and glossy are her long tresses;  
and suffused with a golden hue, her fairness.  
Delay no more, O Dhola;  
repair forthwith to her.

## 4

## Malvani Dissuades Him

The land is parched and burning;  
you'll be scorched  
by the hot desert winds on your journey;  
if you would do as I say,  
just stay put at home  
for the duration of this inclement season.

At Malvani's behest  
Dhola stayed on at home  
for two whole months.  
The summer was now gone,  
and the advent of the monsoons  
at hand.

They were sitting together in a balcony,  
when they saw the clouds  
come up and fill the skies;  
and Dhola remembered the words,  
which Malvani had spoken to him.

There are puddles of water at every step,  
and the clouds provide cool shade  
all along the way.  
The monsoons have come;  
now, if you permit me, my beautiful wife,  
I would proceed to Pugal forthwith.

The young millet crop is lush and green in the fields;  
and interspersed here and there in the verdure,  
the yellow blossoms of the cucumber vines  
enhance the beauty of the landscape;  
Oh, if it but rains well  
through the month of Bhadon,  
the land of Maru is paradise indeed!

The array of advancing clouds  
is like an invading army;  
the play of lighting, the glint of swords;  
and the rain-drops strike one like piercing arrows;  
in this season of the rains,  
O my beloved husband,  
how could I possibly live without you?

The mountain torrents with their waterfalls  
and the wide rivers of the plains  
are in full spate.  
The monsoon rains  
have drenched the whole countryside;  
there is the risk of your camel  
stumbling on the slippery track,  
and Pugal, O traveller, is far away.  
O my beloved husband,  
the month of *Sawan* has come;  
this is the time  
when the wet clay clings

to the feet of the traveller;  
 the climbing vines cling to the stately trees  
 that support them;  
 and women cling to their loving husbands  
 holding on to them  
 in amorous unending embrace.

The days are short,  
 and the nights interminably long;  
 the wind and the waters are extremely cold.  
 O my generous-hearted husband,  
 this surely is no season  
 to abandon my love and go.

The current of the mountain torrent  
 racing down its slopes  
 and the ardour of a petty-minded man's romance—  
 both have one thing in common:  
 they appear to be strong and lusty at first;  
 but in no time do they abate and end.

## 5

## Marvani's Dream

The night before the day Dhola arrived,  
 Marvani dreamed a beautiful dream;  
 and she spoke of it  
 to her friends on the morrow.

O my friends, said she,  
 my beloved met me in a dream;  
 I clung to his neck in a loving embrace, and sobbed.  
 And I wouldn't open my eyes for fear I'd lose him.

The night was dark with heavy clouds;  
 and ever and anon the skies were lit up  
 by the dazzling display of lightning.  
 'Twas then, O friend,  
 That my beloved Salh<sup>1</sup> came to wake me.  
 And his hands were upon my breasts, my dear!

---

1. Dhola

O, if only this dream were true,  
a dream would be a great thing indeed!

O dream, you deceitful prankster,  
I'll have you killed—your heart cut out.  
When I am asleep,  
we are two, my husband and I;  
but when I wake up, alas,  
I find myself alone in my lonely bed.

Then her friends assuaged her anger, saying:  
the dream is not to be blamed;  
on the contrary it deserves much honest praise,  
for, despite his being hundreds of miles away,  
doesn't it bring your dear husband  
to your fond embrace every night?

6

Dhola is Told Marvani is Now Old and Ugly,  
but He is Reassured by Veesu

O Dhola, the woman for whom your heart  
is so a-thrill with excitement,  
listen to what I tell you of her;  
that woman's limbs are now  
flabby and lax with old age,  
and her hair has turned all grey.

O Veesu, says Dhola,  
someone has told me  
Marvani has lost her youth  
and is an old woman now;  
tell me truly if that is so.  
You were three years old  
when you married Marui<sup>1</sup>,  
and she just one and half;  
what makes you think then

---

1. Marvani

that her youth is spent,  
while yours retains its bloom?

Her thighs are slender and soft  
as the petals of the lotus blossom;  
O Dhola, Marui is tall and slim,  
like a switch of the oleander shrub.

The merits of Maru are innumerable  
as are the stars that fill the skies;  
O impatient lover,  
how can I possibly recount them all to you?

Then, says Dhola :  
O Veesu, listen to what I say;  
press on to Pugal at once,  
and give her the good news  
that I come to her tonight.

## 7

## Marvani's Premonition

O my friends,  
my eyes, my navel, my arms and my lips  
in spasms all quiver and throb;  
these are signs boding happiness and joy.  
I am sure my husband rides  
homeward to me today.

As the sun went down the western horizon,  
a line of cloud came up in the sky,  
and Dhola lashed his camel  
with a switch to move faster;  
and presently they reached the outskirts of Pugal.

## 8

## Happy Reunion of Dhola and Maru

As the lovers met  
a surge of joy spread through their bodies and souls.

and a pleasant coolness of contentment filled their eyes;  
and even without the cup of wine  
the intoxication of love  
suffused them with its alluring glow.

Maru sat beside her husband on the lovers' bed,  
and Dhola gazed upon  
the exquisite loveliness of her face interminably,  
and the chamber seemed to be lit up  
by the radiance of her beauty  
like the night by that of the full moon.

He, whom she was wont to see in her dreams only  
that beloved today  
is indeed before her very eyes;  
and she doesn't close them  
lest it should all turn out to be a mere dream.

And then her brassiere was removed,  
and he saw her breasts—  
a pair of absent-minded swans  
floating at their ease  
in the limpid waters of the Mansarovar.

In the third quarter of the night  
the lovers held each other close  
in a long and loving embrace.  
Marui was like the welcoming earth below;  
her husband, the dark rain-cloud  
come low upon it.

*Dhola Maru ra Duha*, 12th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Letter

NARPATI NALH

The only thing we know about the author is that NARPATI NALH (Narpati Nālḥ, 13th century) began the composition of *Beesal Dev Rasau* (Beesal Dev Rāsau), in 1215.

The story of *Beesal Dev Rasau* is as follows: Rajmati, the daughter of Raja Bhoj is married to Beesal Dev of Ajmer. In his pride, he asserts that there is no other king like him. Rajmati disagrees saying that there certainly are kings who are as great, and that one such, for instance, is the king of Orissa whose mines produce diamonds, while his own Sambhar Lake produces only salt. Whereupon

her husband is greatly piqued, and declares he will proceed forthwith to Orissa where he will stay for at least 12 years to collect enough diamonds for her. And off he goes to Orissa, leaving his wife sunk in sorrow and pining for him all the time. At last she sends a letter to her husband through a Brahmin. He carries her letter and message to the king, who eventually returns. The excerpt given below is all about this letter:

The Lady wrote the letter with her own hand,  
and she said:

O Brahmin, go along leading  
a group of travellers,  
and walk well;  
for it is a long journey of seven hundred *kos*<sup>1</sup>,  
across the country's borders.  
No matter if it be the burning sun,  
or the cool shade,  
go right on;  
and take good care of my letter,  
as if it were your own life.

Alas, O friend,  
who will endure agonies such as mine?  
I have given up sleeping on a bed;  
given up also the use of salt in my food.  
The betel-leaf and the areca nut  
I shun like poison,  
and I tell the beads of my rosary  
chanting the name of my lord at all times.  
Counting the days of separation  
has worn down my finger nails;  
and my right arm is weary  
and drained of all its strength,  
shooing away ravens for an omen  
heralding my husband's return.  
O king, you will know how I feel;  
Your own heart will tell you of my plight;  
for though we are bodily two and separate,  
my soul is one with yours.

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1. *Kos* : a distance of two miles.

Such truly am I your wife;  
why must I be abandoned and kept away  
at such a great distance?

I am a daughter of a blameless lineage;  
chains of honour and virtuous modesty  
restrain my passion;  
I keep my youth concealed  
as a thief his stolen treasure,  
and guard my every step  
from the reach of sin.  
Forsaking me in this life  
you have become an exile;  
you may be born a black serpent in the next.

O Pandya, if you make it to the country  
where my beloved dwells,  
tell him, brother, what I tell you here:  
Come home at least this once again;  
I'll keep the path swept clean for you  
with the long and glossy tresses of my head.

The waters of youth have deluged me, O king,  
and I fail to fathom their depths to the bottom.

O Pandya, speak to my beloved  
in a manner that may not offend him.  
Tell him, your wife partakes of no food  
without you;  
her blouse is in tatters at the elbows;  
in tatters too the veil that covers her head.  
She is like a sapling scorched by the forest fire,  
and day and night she pines for you:  
Come my *nanad's*<sup>1</sup> brother, come soon.

Then the Brahmin said :  
Fair Lady, tell me something  
about your husband's appearance,  
some distinguishing mark to go by,

1. Husband's sister.



so that I may the more easily recognize him.  
Tell me who does he look like ?

Of his brothers, he resembles the younger;  
But while his brother here is fair-complexioned,  
my husband is of a darker hue.  
Every morning he adorns his forehead  
with a fresh mark between his brows.  
His chest is broad,  
but he is narrow around his navel;  
He is tall and strong,  
and wears dagger in his waist-band.  
He would stand out conspicuous  
in the midst of a hundred thousand men.  
Such, Pandya, is my beloved husband;  
You will have no difficulty in spotting him.

The letter was tied to the Brahmin's *janeoo*<sup>1</sup>  
and a thousand gold mohurs  
tucked safely away in his valise.  
And the Lady said:  
This should suffice you a whole twelve month.  
Eat well, and use enough ghee in your meals,  
the better to sustain the strength of your shanks;  
and begin your journey within an hour and a half.

Whereupon the Brahmin said:  
Go back, fair Lady, to your house,  
and rest assured,  
I'll bring your husband back along with me.  
And the Lady said, Keep your word, Pandya;  
do as you have said.

Then she touched his feet,  
and folded her hands,  
to bid him farewell, and godspeed.

From *Beesal Dev Rasau*, 13th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

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1. Sacred thread worn by high caste Hindus

## Stanzas of Unrequited Love

### UJALI (?)

JETHWA RA SORTHĀ (Jethwā rā Sorthā late 13th-early 14th century) stem from a story of unrequited love: Jethwa, a prince, goes out hunting astride his horse, and is caught up in a storm. Deep in the woods, more dead than alive, he finds shelter in a solitary hut, which belongs to a poor Charan. The old man and his young daughter, the only occupants of the hut, do all they can to nurse the prince back to health; and in a short time he recovers fully. It is a matter of love at first sight for the prince and the girl. But when Jethwa comes to know that Amra, the old man, is a Charan, he realizes that their marriage is altogether out of the question; for a Rajput would always look upon a Charan of the opposite sex as a brother or sister, never a husband or wife. And so at the dead of night, when Amra, the old man, and his daughter Ujali, are fast asleep in their little room, the prince quietly slips out of the hut and goes away—never to return. Ujali remains a virgin all her life, pining ceaselessly for Jethwa. And the *sorthas* attributed to her remain a classic example of the spontaneous outpourings of a woman's heart wounded by unrequited love.

As regards the authorship of the *sorthas*, it could be that not Ujali herself but some anonymous poet, who lived a little after her time, has versified the emotion-charged feelings of her tragic and hopeless love.

Separated from the herd,  
the deer's heart sinks low  
in a humour of despond;  
how then, O Jethwa,  
could human endure the sorrow  
of being separated  
from his loved ones?

It was on the banks of the Mansarovar  
that I drank to my heart's content  
the nectarous waters of that lake, O Jethwa;  
I cannot now bring myself  
even to think of quenching my thirst  
at any lesser pond.

You have locked the door of my heart, O Jethwa;  
and the lock is heavy and strong.  
And I know not where you have gone away,  
taking its key along with you.  
My heart's door now can open  
only when you come back;  
without you it must remain  
shut for ever.

The form of your lovely image  
is stamped indelibly  
upon the canvas of my inner eye, O Jethwa;  
and never for a moment  
does it disappear from my heart's sight.  
But I go around here and there,  
looking for you in vain.  
Where, O where, my beloved sweet-heart,  
will I ever stand  
face to face before you?

The cuckoo's loud cooing  
pierces my heart like an arrow;  
and waves of anguish,  
following one upon another,  
fill it with unrelenting sorrow and gloom;  
for though I look around on all sides for Jethwa,  
I see him nowhere  
in the whole wide world.

The incessant showers of the monsoon clouds  
fill the hearts of the peacocks with joy;  
but my heart alone  
knows the anguish of sorrow within me.  
Where, O where, Jethwa,  
should I go to look for you?

I went to the distant banks of the Mansarovar  
to look for the swan of my heart;  
but it was in vain, O Jethwa,  
for I found the lake shores  
totally deserted.

'Twere my eyes  
that planted his love in my heart,  
deep within which  
it now dwells eternally.  
But though I look for him all around, O Jethwa,  
I do not find  
the object of my true love  
anywhere in the whole world.

## A Parable

[The Story of an Old Unhappy Woman]

TARUN PRABH SURI

TARUN PRABH SURI (Tarun Prabh Sūri, 14th century). The name of the place and the date of his birth are not known. But we know that he was duly initiated in the Jain Dharma by Jin Chandra Suri in 1311 and raised to the rank of Acharya by Jin Kushal Suri in 1331. He wrote his *Shadavashyak Balavabodh* (Ṣadāvashyak Bālṽabodh) in 1354.

*Shadavashyak*, as the name itself indicates, lays down the six precepts of right conduct for the Jains. And *Balavabodh* is a commentary which not only explains the meaning of the text but elaborates it with the help of simple parables which make it easily comprehensible to the laymen even to children. In these parables we find the earliest examples of chaste Rajasthani prose like the one that follows :

In a village there once lived an old and unhappy woman stricken with extreme penury. She had a son named Hamsau. To earn a livelihood he grazed the calves of the village folk. At eventide one day, as he was bringing the calves back from the woodland, he was bitten by a snake. With the very potent poison taking speedy effect, he swooned and fell down; and lay on the ground as motionless as wood. Someone came to the village and spoke to the old woman: "Your son has been bitten by a snake; he is lying unconscious out there."

From *Shadavashyak Balavabodh*, 14th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Implacable Veeram

DHADI BADAR

DHADI BADAR (Dhādi Bādar, 14th-15th century), a Muslim minstrel, is the author of the *Veermayan* (Virmāyan) in which he describes many battles and events anent the early Rathors and the Johiyas: Jaitmal, Veeram and Mallinath are the sons of Rao Salkha; Jagmal, the son of Mallinath; and Choonda and Goga, the sons of Veeram; and among the Johiyas are Dalla, and his brothers Madoo, Jasa and Depal. *Veermayan* is composed in *nisanis* and *dohas*, and cover a period from a little before 1374, when Mallinath became the ruler of Mahewa and Khed, to 1402, when Goga was killed by the Johiyas. The author was himself an eye-witness to the latter part of these events.

In the fragment given below, the Johiyas have rounded up and driven away the cows of Veeram in retaliation to the excesses committed by him against

them. Veeram immediately resolves to go after them. A battle is imminent. Veeram's wife, Mangaliyani, tries to stop him from pursuing this course. But Veeram remains inflexible. In the battle that ensues, both Veeram and Johiya Madoo die fighting on the field near Lakhvera, along with many other warriors on both sides. This happened in 1383.

Queen Mangaliyani stood there  
telling him not to go:  
"Do not go to fight the Johiyas;  
O lion-like warrior,  
listen to what I say."  
But flushed with anger  
Veeram cut her short:  
"Stop, Queen; and speak no more.  
For I have pledged my word.  
Not a drop of water shall I drink  
before I take revenge".  
All the brave warriors  
were raging with anger;  
it was as though  
the very Angels of Death  
had been offended.  
"How can our cattle be driven away  
by any robbers  
while we Salkhanis are still alive  
and upon our feet?"

Veeram then rose to his feet  
and hollered to his men  
to get their horses saddled,  
and to tighten their waist-bands.  
The Rathors donned their armour  
and picked up their swords.  
And he ordered his groom  
to have his own mount readied  
and brought to him.

Presently Queen Mangaliyani came back  
to plead with Veeram once again  
to refrain from going after the Johiyas;  
"The brave Dalla has always suffered  
your many transgressions with great restraint;  
I beg of you to parda him this once.

I beseech you, my lord,  
 accede to this behest of mine;  
 do not go to fight the Johiyas today.  
 All those cows of yours,  
 — no harm will come to them.  
 Dalla will bring them back  
 to Lakhvera tomorrow morning,  
 and return them all to you.  
 After all he is my brother;  
 and I'll write a letter to him."

Whereupon says Veeram:  
 "O Mangaliyani, do you think  
 anyone could ever rustle my cows  
 and leave the borders of Lakhvera  
 safe and sound with impunity?  
 If I should sit at home doing nothing,  
 the Johiyas would think Veeram funks!  
 The Great Serpent would refuse  
 to hold the burden of the earth  
 on his outspread hood;  
 the sun would rise in the west;  
 the tenets of the Vedas would perish;  
 the speed of Garud,  
 the Eagle God, would abate;  
 the Great God Mahadev himself  
 would lose the focus of his contemplation;  
 the premier sage Gorakh  
 would forget his wisdom;  
 Lakshman's vow of celibacy  
 would be broken;  
 Sita would abandon her virtue  
 and fidelity to Rama;  
 and the heart even of Hanuman  
 would be filled with anxiety  
 and tremble with fear.  
 Having got the news of the rustlers  
 making off with my cows,  
 if I should sit at home  
 harbouring any apprehensions,  
 the whole world would go topsy-turvy."  
 The queen continues with her exhortations  
 She sheds copious tears  
 that run down her face;

and she clutches at a corner of his garment  
to stop him still.

But the groom has readied Samadh,  
his peerless mare;  
and Veeram, setting his foot to the stirrup,  
is upon her in an instant.

From *Veermayan*, 14th-15th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Ranmal's Assassination at Chittor

CHANAN KHIDIYA

CHANAN KHIDIYA (Cānan Khidiya, 1395) was a contemporary of Maharana Mokal and Kumbha. He had come over from Sanchor to Mewar where he was an esteemed poet at Mokal's court, and held a *jagir* granted by him.

He was at Chittor when Ranmall was killed in 1438 and seeing that there was no one to take care of his body, he took it upon himself, as a sacred duty to a friend and Rajput, to perform Ranmall's last rites; and cremated his body in the very room in which he was murdered. Kumbha was greatly incensed on account of this. He confiscated his *jagir* and exiled him from his dominion. But Jodha never forgot his obligation to Chanan, and when he recovered Mandor, he sent Purohit Damodar to bring the poet to his court. He extended a hearty welcome to Chanan and made a gift of village Godhelao to him in *jagir*. Later on Jodha added two more villages to his *Jagir*—Kharadi and Kanwaliyan near Jetaran.

Chanan is said to have written a lot of poetry; but only stray *dohas*, *geets* and *kavitts* attributed to him are to be found in hand-written anthologies.

As for the *kavitt* given below, some scholars are of the opinion that this has been written by some unknown poet (perhaps a contemporary) about Chanan; but there are others who believe it is Chanan's own composition. It should be noted that Chanan here is speaking of himself in the third person.

A foul and dastardly crime  
was committed at Chittor;  
Rao Ranmall of Mandor  
was treacherously killed in his bedroom.  
Chanan, the poet,  
performed the last rites for the Rao  
and consigned his body to the flames  
inviting the wrath  
of Maharana Kumbha  
upon his head.

"Quit my lands and be gone", said he,  
his countenance flushed with anger;  
whereupon the poet scornfully cast aside the copper-plate  
that confirmed the bestowal on him of his estate as gift from the Maharana,  
and repaired forthwith to Toda  
which place thence on was his new home.

But Jodha, the son and successor of Ranmall,  
Forgot not the debt of gratitude  
he owed to the poet;  
he sent Purohit Damo to bring him to his court,  
and with a glad and grateful heart  
he accorded the poet a befitting welcome,  
conferring on him,  
besides much wealth and honour,  
the village Godhelao  
as a *jagir* in his realm.

*Chittod Mein Ranmall Mathai Chook*, 14th-15th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Hoshang's Army Moves Against Achaldas

SHIVDAS GADAN

SHIVDAS GADAN (Shivdās Gādan, 15th century) was a contemporary of Rai Achaldas Khichi of Gagraungarh and an esteemed poet of his court. He is famous for his *Achaldas Khichi ri Vachanika* (Achaldas Khichi ri Vacanika, c. 1425) in which he describes the army of Hoshang Ghorī which marched upon Gagraungarh; and how Achaldas, disdaining all thoughts of surrender, defended the fort for two whole weeks, before the situation became impossible. Then he sent his reluctant son Palhansi, out of the fort to live to fight another day, to expel the foe from the fort and avenge his father's death. Then his queens along with all the thousands of women in the fort, performed the *Jauhar* by consigning themselves to the flames even before their husbands fell on the field of battle. Finally throwing open the gates of the fort, he sallied forth into the besieging hordes of Hoshang to die fighting gloriously to the very end.

Shivdas Gadan seems to have been with Achaldas at this time and represents himself as an eyewitness of the events of the battle. He "sustained the siege of the fort till the very last moment when he put himself in safety to survive and be able to immortalize the heroic death of the Khichi, his master" (L.P. Tessitori). Perhaps he left the fort with Palhansi, the son of Achaldas.



The battle was fought in the year 1423 from the 13th to the 27th of September. Shivas must have begun writing the *Vachanika* soon after the battle, and completed it within a couple of years probably circa 1425.

The *Vachanika* is written partly in prose and partly in verse. The excerpt given below describes the great army of Hoshang that marched against Gagraungarh and the defiant mood of Achaldas.

The great army of Emperor Ghorī included 12 lac chakravarti rajas and 93 lac soldiers of Malwa. As this army marched forward, its hidden glory shone forth in all its brilliance. I will describe the chief men who formed part of this army: Who were the rajas and nawabs included in it? There were Moslem warriors like Usman Khan, Fateh Khan, Gazni Khan, Umar Khan, Haibat Khan and Mugees Khan. And who were the Hindu rajas included in it? There were brave rajas like Narsinghdas—veterans, well-versed in the art of warfare.

An idea of the strength and size of the teeming army of Narsinghdas can be had from the fact that the pools which were brimming with water when the vanguard of that army reached them there were mere mud-holes by the time its centre approached them, and dry dust blowing in the wind when the rear end got there. Such was Narsinghdas—indeed, a second Vikramaditya.

(Doha)

Dwelling in the dense forests,  
they are denizens of the same habitat;  
why then this great difference  
that while an elephant fetches a lac,  
the lion none would take  
for even a cownie?

(Kundaliya)

The elephant allows itself to be taken into bondage,  
a rope round its neck, and led whichever way desired;  
if the lion submitted to such captivity in like manner,  
it would perhaps sell for ten lacs and more.

Incensed by the taunting words of the Emperor,  
Achaldas took on the imperial army,  
and in the combat of swords that ensued,  
he fought with mere daggers in both his hand  
The great Narsingh accepted subjection  
like the mighty elephant;  
the Rai, like the lion, did not.

This Narsinghdas had led a cavalry of 32 thousand horse, and untold number of elephants; and drunk with the desire for battle he had continued to advance till he had reached the very shores of the ocean, in whose waters at long last he washed his bloodied sword. He had thus humbled many a powerful king.

With Narsinghdas were his two sons; Chandji and Khemji — in valour and prowess their father's equals. Chakravarti Raja Lakham Rao of Matangpuri; the like of Dev Singh; the Chakravarti Raja of Bundi, and other Devra Hindu rajas who could capture and release their foremen as they willed; the like of Samarsi, a second Maldev; and many such other warriors marched with the army.

And from what countries did these come? 87 from Nimar, the world-famous Mandhata; and amirs and umraos from Aser, Durgapur and Silarpur. And Mandu, Dhar and Ujjain of Madhyadesh; and khans and mirs and umraos with the *chaturangini* forces from other places also joined the attacking army. And what is more, the Emperor himself got his steed saddled and mounted it.

What Hindu Raja could even think of standing up against the wrath of the Emperor? Who had lost his head to dare defy him? It was like offending God himself. What mother gave birth to one who would take up arms against him?

The great warriors Som and Satal were no more; nor was there now any the like of the valorous Kanharde; neither the Gehlots of Tilak Chhappar, nor the Rawal of Seehor. Even the unbending Hameer was no more. Who could now possibly stand up against the Emperor?

There have been great Emperors in the past, each more powerful than the other, who had conquered 84 forts in a few days; but this Sultan was verily a second Allauddin—he had conquered 84 forts in a single day! Who could defy the terrible dread of this Emperor? Who could possibly stand up against him? Who had the skill and strength to achieve anything against him? North and south, east and west, this Emperor was the victor of all the four corners of the earth. His prowess and exploits were limitless.

Bravo, Raja Achaldas! Great indeed are you who have drawn your sword to defy such an Emperor.

Even when the Emperor marched against him, he did not lose his nerve; he abandoned not his pride, nor his resolution; he spoke not words of submissive humility, nor would he give up his fort without a fight. Such was Achaldas., He alone was his own equal. What kind of a warrior was he? He was like the strong gates of a fort to invaders coming from the north or south and from the east or west. In glory he was the like of Ajaypal; in prowess and

pride, the like of Ravan; a second Dharu; a third Singhan; the support of all the sects and systems of religion; a chakravarti despite his young age. Praise-worthy indeed is he—he who took up his sword in defiance of the Emperor.

*Vachanika Achaldas Khichi ri*, 15th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Jodha Wreaks Vengeance against Mewar

### PASAYAT GADAN

PASAYAT GADAN (Pasāyat Gādan) was a contemporary of Maharana Kumbha. He wrote between 1433 and 1474. He is known to have authored *Rav Rinmal ro Rupak*, which narrates the exploits of Ranmall and his assassination at the instance of Kumbha in Chittor, and *Gun Jodhayan*, which gives an account of the brave deeds of Ranmall's son, Jodha, besides other miscellaneous poems.

The two verses given below are from his *Gun Jodhayan*, which describe Jodha's vengeance on Mewar.

#### 1

Mounted on his chain-mailed charger,  
he crossed the Aravalli hills;  
and he struck at the gates of Chittor.  
The awesome thunder of his war-drums  
was heard far and wide;  
and its dread aborted the pregnancies  
of the women even of distant Kumbhalmer.  
The scion of Choonda  
burnt down the gates of Chittor,  
and entering the fort,  
Jodha made his salutations  
at his father Ranmall's chamber.

#### 2

Where once there had been palaces,  
dust and ashes now blow, driven by gusts of wind;  
Where horses used to be tethered,  
there now sit undisturbed  
the deer of the wild forests;  
Where there had been

busy and bustling centres  
 of trade and commerce,  
 owls have made their nests  
 and hatched their young ones;  
 and in the woodlands  
 where once cattle and sheep  
 had grazed fearlessly,  
 the tigress has given birth to her cubs  
 and rears them unhampered.  
 The Rathor Rao Jodha  
 has laid waste the lands of Kumbha;  
 and in all the space between Ajmer and Abu  
 the inhabitants lead a life  
 beset by untold hazards.

From *Gun Jodhayan*, 15th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Thus Spake Jambho

### JAMBHOJI

JAMBHOJI (1451-1536) was born at Pipasar. He founded the Vishnoi sect (of the 29 articles of faith) in 1485. He died at Lalasar, Bikaner. His poems were preserved only in the oral tradition. We now have an edition of his complete works brought out by Hiralal Maheswari.

The lines given below present the author's thoughts regarding the origin of the universe and his identity with the Ultimate Reality. They bring to one's mind the Song of Creation of the Rig Veda.

There was then no Air, nor any Water,  
 No Earth, nor Firmament;  
 There was no Sun and no Moon,  
 Nor any Stars in the Sky were there.

No cows there were, nor any cowherd;  
 No Illusion; no Friendship, no Love;  
 No Mother, no Father, no Sister or Brother;  
 No Kith and Kin; no Family.

None of the eighty-four lac species of life there was,  
 Nor any of the eighteen categories of Flora in the woods.  
 The Underworld was not; nor the Great Serpent;  
 The Salt-watered Ocean too was not.

There was then the pristine, taintless Shambhu alone;  
Or just an impenetrable Fog.

When was this? men ask.  
Thirty-six long aeons ago, and thirty-six more before that;  
And further endless aeons ago.

But even then I was, just as now I am;  
And will be for all time to come.

*Jambhvani*, 15th-16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Stanzas in Praise of Uma De

### ASA BARHAT

ASA BARHAT (Asā Bārhat, 1493-1593) was a famous poet and scholar who lived a long life of full one hundred years. The uncle of the saintly Barhat Eesardas, the most revered of all the poets of his time, Asaji was an especially favoured poet at the court of Rao Maldev. Maldev ascended the throne of Marwar in 1531. Five years later he married Bhatiyani Uma De, the daughter of Rawal Loonkaran of Jaisalmer. And the very night they were wedded, there occurred an unhappy incident which marred their conjugal relations for all time. As the queen, bedecked with all the finery and adornments of a bride, entered the nuptial chamber, she was taken aback at seeing her drunken husband holding her maid-servant Bharmali in a forced embrace. She turned back at once, never to speak a word to Maldev throughout her life.

She went back forthwith to her parents in Jaisalmer. A fairly long time after this incident, Maldev sent Asaji to try and persuade her to come back to him. And Uma De had allowed herself to be prevailed upon to return to her lord; and actually left Jaisalmer for Jodhpur with the poet. But in the middle of her journey she insisted that the poet tell her honestly what he thought of her return to her husband, and whether her husband would always treat her with due respect and love. To this Asaji replied in a couplet which, translated, reads thus; "If you must keep your pride, you shall have to give up your husband; but if it is your husband you would have, let go of your pride. Two elephants cannot possibly be tethered together at the same stake."

Hearing this Uma De turned about at once to go back to Jaisalmer — this time, for good. Never again in all her life would she even think of going back to her husband. This was in 1538. In 1547 she went to Gundoj, and after some time, to Kelwa, where she lived for the rest of her life. But when the news of Maldev's death in Mandor reached her in 1562, she forthwith ascended the sati's pyre along with the turban of her lord which had been brought to her.

Asaji composed 14 kavitas in praise of Sati Uma De, immortalizing her glorious performance for all time. Asaji had authored many other works of poetry

in his life like "Rawal Mala ro Gun", "Goga ji ri Pedi", "Rao Chandrasen ra Rupak", etc.

The excerpt given below is a sample from his stanzas written for Sati Uma de Bhatiyani.

With the coming of the hour of his end,  
the Lord of Mandor breathed his last.  
Hearing of this  
his estranged but noble wife Uma,  
resolved to burn herself after her husband.  
She took Rao Maldev's turban,  
and draping it around her neck,  
stood ready to ascend the pyre.

Fragrant incense  
and sandalwood from Malayagiri,  
and camphor and *ghee*  
were fed into the fire.  
The thirty-three crore gods  
assembled on high,  
to witness the glorious deed.  
Her face  
brilliant as the moon at its fullest,  
Uma follows Maldev  
to make both houses — the house of Rawal Karan  
and that of Rao Ganga —  
resplendent with glory.

The honour and glory,  
for which Hameer chose to die fighting  
at Ranthambhor;  
for which Patal laid down his life at Pavagadh;  
for which Rao Choonda died at Nagor,  
Kanhra De at Jalor,  
and Dooda at Jaisalmer—  
for upholding that honour  
and glory of great families,  
the daughter of Rawal Karan,  
the noble Uma,  
in true Rajput tradition,  
gives up her life today  
for her husband Maldev.

Alone after his death on the battlefield  
 had Ravan been sent to the heavens  
 by Queen Mandodari;  
 Kunti too  
 had only bidden her lord, Pandu, adieu,  
 when he left this world;  
 when Kanha died,  
 none of his beloved gopis  
 left her hand-mark on any pillar;<sup>1</sup>  
 and even Kaushalya had failed  
 to accompany her lord King Dashrath  
 at the time of his final journey  
 on the pyre.

All these noble women  
 had strayed from their path of duty  
 on these great occasions;  
 for who can dare to face  
 the leaping flames of all-consuming fire?  
 But, says Uma,  
 how can I follow their example  
 and fail in my duty  
 on this, the greatest of all occasions?

She bathed with water  
 brought from the Ganga,  
 and draped herself  
 in fresh and colourful attire,  
 her long tresses  
 were left unplaited and loose,  
 and her face shone  
 with the brilliance of the rising sun;  
 And fidelity to her lord  
 exuded from every pore of her body.

Bedecked with all the sixteen adornments,  
 she mounted a horse,  
 and approached the funeral pyre.

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1. When a woman went forth to commit *Sati*, she left an imprint of the palm of her hand on a pillar or wall to commemorate the event. Such hand-marks were looked upon with great reverence and worshipped by the family for generations.

Then, circumambulating around it  
with the stately gait of the swans,  
she ascended into the awesome flames of the fire,  
and reached the abode of the gods,  
where she joined her lord  
and filled his heart with gladness and joy.  
Thus did the Bhatiyani Queen Uma  
break her life-long estrangement  
with her husband and lord, Rao Mal.

*Sati Uma De ra Kavitt*, 15th-16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## God Almighty is the Provider of All

### ALU NATH KAVIYA

ALU NATH KAVIYA (Alu Nāth Kaviyā, 1463-1574), was born at Sinla near Jetaran; and lived a long life of 111 years and passed away at Jasrana near Kuchaman. A small cenotaph marks the place where he is said to have taken the *Jivit Samadhi* (i.e. got himself buried alive of his own free will). He was a saintly man, greatly revered by all, and mostly wrote poetry about devotion to God. But he also wrote verses commemorating brave men and their heroic deeds. In the poems given below he advocates complete trust in God.

The peacocks feed on the hills,  
and the lesser birds  
on the fruit-bearing trees of the countryside.  
The elephants find their food  
in the dark forests of the Kajliban;  
and the royal swans feed upon the pearls in the Mansarovar.  
The unperching *anad*<sup>1</sup> birds  
feed on the prey they catch in mid-air,  
soaring high in the skies;  
and the serpents find theirs  
in the depths of the underworld.  
The lions hunt in the woodlands;  
and the horses always feed  
at their stalls in the stables.

1. Mythical birds believed always to remain flying high in the sky, never coming down to perch-at all-even mating, and laying their eggs on the wing, the falling eggs hatching before reaching the ground below and the birdlings flying off right away.



All the creatures of the world  
 are thus provided for;  
 none goes hungry.  
 Why then bother to amass all this wealth, O men?  
 Be assured and fear not;  
 for the Lord Almighty is the provider of all.

*Eeswar Nirbharta ro Kavitt*, 15th-16th century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

## Five Songs of Devotion

### MIRAN BAI

Born at Bajoli Village of Merta Pargana, MIRA (Mirā 16th century) was the daughter of Ratan Singh and the grand-daughter of Rao Duda, the ruler of Merta, an independent principality of Rajasthan. She was married to Bhojraj, the second son of Rana Sanga, in 1516. Bhojraj died ten years later while his father was still alive.

From her early childhood Mira had been a devotee of Lord Krishna. Now that love had grown and become all absorbing, she had no trouble in pursuing her devotional love for Krishna while Sanga lived. But after his death began a period of trials and tribulations in Mira's life.

Rana Ratan Singh's successor Vikramaditya, who was his younger brother and who came to the throne after Ratan Singh's death in 1531, was impulsive, self-willed and depraved, and soon became a sworn enemy of Mira. He went to the extent of trying to kill her regarding her as a blot on the honour of the royal family. She was poisoned, and a venomous snake was sent to her in a wicker basket. But Mira miraculously survived unscathed. At last in 1533 Mira left Chittor and went to her parental home, Merta. From Merta Mira is said to have gone to Vrindaban; and finally to Dwaraka, where she pursued her devotion to Lord Krishna oblivious of all else.

Her devotional songs are the finest of the kind: spontaneous outpourings of a loving heart. They are very popular in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and sung by the religiously inclined men and women throughout the land.

Below are five of her songs. In the first she speaks of her love at first sight; in the second, of the agonies of separation from her Beloved; in the third she says she cannot write a letter, but would have the traveller go to her Beloved and say what he has himself seen of her; in the fourth she speaks of her intoxication with love, the end of delusion, and the dawn of knowledge; and in the fifth, of her final fulfilment and communion with her Lord.

O my friend, my eyes,  
 greedy with intense longing  
 to keep drinking in His beauty,  
 couldn't come back to me.  
 It fills me from head to toe,  
 it permeates every pore of mine;  
 and yet the insatiable thirst  
 for His comely charm  
 drives them on irresistibly.

I was standing in the courtyard  
 of my house,  
 when Mohan passed that way.  
 Abandoning all restraints  
 of modesty and lineage,  
 I lifted my veil and looked at Him.  
 Our eyes met, and He smiled;  
 And I lost my heart to Him.

Neighbours and relatives  
 admonish and advise me;  
 and even have all sorts  
 of stories to tell.  
 But my restless sprightly eyes  
 would stop at nothing.  
 They have sold themselves  
 into another's hand,  
 and no longer have control  
 over themselves.

Good or bad, let people  
 say what they will;  
 their comments I shall not counter,  
 but accept with all humility.

Mira says,  
 I confess I cannot  
 live a moment longer  
 without seeing by Beloved Giridhar.

## 2

O my friend, I can sleep to more.  
I spent the whole night  
gazing down the path  
for the coming of my Beloved.  
All my companions gathered around me  
to offer good advice;  
but my heart would heed none of it.  
Without a glimpse of Him  
there would be no peace of mind;  
Such indeed is my heart's obsession  
My whole body  
and all its extremities  
are racked with unbearable pain;  
and the name of my Beloved  
is ever on my lips.  
My inner anguish of separation  
none could perceive.  
Like the rain-bird that pines  
for the cloud,  
and the fish in the throes of death  
for want of water,  
Mira is all disconsolate  
and beside herself with grief  
—sunk in the sorrow of separation  
from her Beloved.

## 3

But how can I write a letter, O friend?  
I cannot possibly do it;  
for, as soon as I pick up a pen,  
my hand trembles;  
and my eyes are filled with tears,  
which rain unceasingly down.  
And when I try to say something,  
my heart is aflutter with a strange apprehension;  
my voice is choked, and words fail me.

O traveller, you have seen my plight  
for yourself.

Go and speak of it to Hari.  
 He, Giridhar, alone is my Lord  
 ' says Mira  
 Tell Him, the Merciful One,  
 to grant me a place  
 at His lotus-feet for all time.

4

Intoxicated am I  
 with the love of god!  
 A delightful drizzle drenches my robe;  
 Lightning flashes all around,  
 and thunder booms in the clouds overhead.  
 My Satguru has opened the door  
 and dispelled all delusion;  
 and revealed unto me  
 the Mystery of Life.  
 The One I see in all, and yet apart.  
 I'll light the lamp of knowledge, says Mira,  
 and climb to the unattainable heights  
 of the roof-top attic of nectarous bliss.

5

Let us repair  
 to the inaccessible realm of the Lord,  
 where Death itself fears to tread;  
 and where, in the brimming pools of love,  
 the happy swans play.

Dressed in the robe of Modesty,  
 with Patience for my skirt;  
 Forgiveness, the bracelets on my wrists;  
 Right Thinking the ring on my finger;  
 an expansive and generous heart,  
 the double-stringed necklace on my bosom;  
 Truth, the shawl on my shoulders;  
 my body and soul cleansed  
 by the cosmetic paste of my  
 preceptor's teachings,  
 rinsed in deep meditation;

Flawless Understanding, my beautiful ear-rings;  
 Right Technique, the cluster  
 of bejewelled pendants  
 swaying below my temples;  
 The Name of Hari, the nose-ring  
 suspended on my lips;

A pure and taintless mind,  
 the set of ivory bangles adorning my arms;  
 Virtue and Contentment,  
 the trinkets on my toes;  
 Oneness with the Infinite,  
 the jingling bells on my anklets;  
 Knowledge gained from my Guru,  
 the vermilion spot between my brows  
 and the string of proboscidian pearls  
 around my neck:  
 thus fully decked  
 with all the sixteen adornments,  
 and with the dazzling golden head-piece  
 set over my forehead;  
 Steadfast in my love for my Lord;  
 and disdainful of all others,  
 I entered His mansion.  
 And my Beloved Lord came unto me,  
 and accepted me as His hand-maid  
 for ever more.

*Mira ra Panch Pad*, 16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Selections

### PRITHVI RAJ RATHOR

PRITHVI RAJ RATHOR (Pṛthvi Rāj Rāthor, 1549-1600) was the son of Raja Kalyanmal of Bikaner and the brother of Raja Raesingh, one of the most powerful generals of Emperor Akbar. He was a famous poet and scholar, and an especially favoured courtier of Akbar, besides being a great admirer of Maharana Pratap and his unbending attitude in defiance of the Emperor.

He is best known for his *Veli Krishna Rukmani ri* which he composed between 1580 and 1587.

He has also written a great number of miscellaneous poems on a variety of topics. We give below, as samples of his poetry, (1) one of his very famous *geets* in praise of Pratap and (2) a longish fragment from his *Veli*, describing the meeting of Krishna and Rukmani on the first night after their wedding.

1

In Praise of Pratap

Where men are without honour,  
and women devoid of shame;  
Where Akbar is the trafficker  
in the tortuous alleys of evil commerce;  
There at the cross-roads  
of that glittering bazaar,  
How can the Lord of Chittor go  
to barter away the honour and glory  
of the Rajput race?

At the Moslems' fairs of the *Navroz*  
where hardly any escaped being swindled,  
There, in the imperial forums of Delhi,  
the Lord of the Hindus goes not  
to squander his self-respect  
and the lofty principles  
of the Rajput.

His eye keeps in constant view  
the blameless honour of his lineage,  
and he shuns the subtle worldly ways  
of scheming for selfish ends;  
He would much rather meet with ruin upright  
than stoop to gather dishonorable gain.  
No wonder then the scion of Hameer  
goes not to the Emperor's mart to vend  
the wares his heart holds dear.

He looks to the name and fame of his sires,  
and stands on the strength of his lance;  
Other Kings and Princes sold their honour for a price;  
the scion of Khoman alone  
preserved his unsullied.

These disgraceful bazaars  
will become a thing of the past,  
and so indeed will the wily Akbar himself.  
But the story will remain:  
'Twas the Rana who saved

the Rajput's honour—  
 which legacy now  
 let all men cherish,  
 and endeavour still  
 to emulate his example.

*Khatr-vat thir rakhi Khooman*, 16th century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

2

The First Night Together

Praised profusely for her beauty  
 by all her women-friends,  
 Rukmani stood ready to meet her beloved Lord,  
 whilst Krishna paced impatiently to and fro  
 between the bridal bed and the door of the chamber—  
 ever and anon putting his ear to it  
 to catch any tell-tale sound of her arrival.

Then, the jingling of her anklet bells  
 and the fragrance of her perfumed attire  
 wafted on the air, like heralds  
 announced to the restless Krishna  
 the arrival of Rukmani—  
 who moved forward  
 with the slow and stately gait of the swans.

Supported on her confidante's arm,  
 and exuding the freshness of intoxicating youth,  
 the coyly demurring Rukmani was led forward  
 —halting every few steps,  
 like an ichor-stained wilful elephant  
 trailing heavy chains to hold him back.  
 As Rukmani crossed the threshold of the chamber,  
 an ineffable joy thrilled Krishna's heart;  
 and his hair stood on end  
 as though in spontaneous welcome.

At long last the coveted moment had come!  
 Krishna lifted her up in his arms,  
 and cradling her close against his breast,  
 he set her gently down on to the bridal bed.

Although Madhav was one  
whose every desire had been fulfilled,  
yet his eyes were insatiably athirst  
to drink in the exquisite beauty of Rukmani;  
and he gazed steadfastly upon her face like a penniless pauper,  
suddenly come upon a hoard of treasure,  
unable to take his eyes off the glittering gold.

Rukmani's sidelong glances  
shot back and forth from behind her veil  
like an agent go-between  
carrying her messages of love to Krishna;  
or like a shuttle  
moving to and fro in the warp and woof of the yarn  
to weave them into one fabric.

Divining their hearts' desire from the signs  
on the faces of the bride and her groom,  
Rukmani's women-friends, with meaningful smiles  
playing ever so slyly between their brows,  
all went away one by one,  
leaving the lovers alone.

Then began what was meet  
only in undisturbed and absolute privacy—  
their love play !  
Unseen and unknown  
even by the gods, and the sages and seers;  
how could anyone ever describe  
what was never seen, nor ever heard of?  
Only they who enjoyed that play themselves  
do know it.

At the end of their love play,  
Krishna, desiring some fresh air,  
stepped out on to a balcony;  
while Rukmani, languid with exhaustion,  
lay limp on the bed like a lotus-vine  
plucked from its stem  
by some playful elephant  
cavorting in the lake.



Beads of sweat stood out  
around the red *kumkum* spot  
on Rukmani's forehead.  
'Twas as though the divine craftsman, cupid himself  
had decked a golden plate with jewels,  
setting sparkling diamonds  
around a large and luminous ruby  
in their midst.

The jingling of her anklets was stilled,  
as were the dulcet cooing moans in her throat,  
her countenance was pale, her mind distraught,  
and her heart beat fast and wild;  
and her eyes were filled with blushing shame.

As the tender vine,  
burdened by the weight of the honey-bees,  
droops and falls to the ground;  
yet winding its tendrils around a plantain stem  
climbs up again to stand;  
even so entwining her slender arms  
in loving embrace around her confidante's neck,  
Rukmani rose to her feet.

Her hair was dishevelled;  
her necklace of pearls snapped asunder;  
the strings of her brassiere were undone;  
undone too the girdle around her slender waist,  
adorned with little bells;  
and assailed simultaneously  
with bashful modesty, fear and love  
she was once again set beside her Lord  
on the bridal couch.

And when they knew that once again  
Rukmani and Krishna were immersed  
in the pleasures of love's dalliance,  
her intimate women-friends  
abandoned themselves to mirthful gossip,

filling the terraces and painted roof-top halls  
with girlish laughter.

From *Veli Krishna Rukmani Ri*, 16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Slaying of Bahlol

GORDHAN BOGSA

GORDHAN BOGSA (Gordhan Bogsā, 16th century) of village Dingrol in Mewar was a contemporary of Maharana Pratap, and took part in the Battle of Haldighati, in 1576, fighting for him against the imperial army led by Kunwar Man Singh of Amber. He is well known for his *geets* about warriors and their gallant deeds. The one given below describes Maharana Pratap's slaying of Bahlol Khan in the Battle of Haldighati, of which he was an eye-witness.

Of prodigious bulk, like an elephant himself,  
Bahlol on his war-horse had stood  
With his troopers around him, beside Prince Man's  
Great towering tusker unawed,  
When Pratap's heavy sword engored did fall  
Unerringly on the Moghul's morion.

Mounted on Chetak, the son of Udey Singh  
Putting all his strength in his stroke,  
He smote the proud Mirza with his slashing steel  
Which flashed and crashed on his crown,  
Like lightning on to the mountain's peak  
From the skies overcast with clouds.

The fearless were fascinated by the carnage around them;  
The hills were drenched with bloodshed;  
And when other chieftains thought of retreating,  
Pratap had forged into the fray;  
And his awesome stroke did cleave the Moghul  
Like catgut cutting through soap.

His prowess with the broadsword both armies acclaimed;  
It had cut through the helmet and the head as well,  
As well through the cuirass as the corporal bulk,  
And the chainmail of his charger and the charger as well.

*Bahlol Vadh*, 16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Praises Galore to the Land of Dhat<sup>1</sup>

RANGRELO BITHU

RANGRELO BITHU (Rangrelo Bithu, 16th century) was a contemporary of Rawal Har Raj of Jaisalmer and Raja Rae Singh of Bikaner. He was born at Sangad in Marwar. In his early boyhood he had gone to Kachh-Bhuj, where he prosecuted his studies in poesy. Later he lived in Jaisalmer. He was fond of travelling and he described the lands and the people he came across. A specialist in satire, he wrote verses ridiculing the land and people of Jaisalmer, not sparing the Rawal's own court and family as well. This incensed the Rawal's who got him arrested and thrown into prison. When Raja Rae Singh came to Jaisalmer to wed the daughter of Rawal Har Raj, he secured his release and extended his patronage to him.

Some of the verses ridiculing Jaisalmer are given below as samples of his poetry.

The low hills are stony, russet and bare,  
with no trees on them save the stunted thorny cactus.  
You wouldn't hear the call of a peacock  
in all the land  
hyenas, porcupines and monitor lizards  
are the only creatures that you'd come across.  
The people are starved;  
hunger drives them afield  
in search of the prickly grass,  
whose seeds I have seen them eat.  
Such are the Jadavs of Jaisalmer.

The senior queen drives her donkeys  
to a distant pond to fetch her water;  
alone she must go,  
and bestirring with her hands  
the water  
to clear its surface  
of the floating dirt and debris,  
fill her pots;  
and load them on to the wooden frames  
on the donkeys' backs  
and drive them home,  
trudging all the way,  
tired and exhausted.

---

1. The land around Jaisalmer.

The king's chief bard is pot-bellied;  
 he wears his lower garment  
 in a loose unseemly manner;  
 he is lame in both his legs;  
 and groans at every step as he walks.  
 The carpet on which the Rawal's court assembles  
 is worn, with large holes in it;  
 his poets are all stupid.  
 and cannot distinguish between  
 a buffalo and an elephant;  
 to them coarse wool  
 and silk are just the same.  
 Such is the land of Dhat!  
 Praises be to the land of Dhat!

The comely women all go  
 to fetch water at dawn;  
 they return past midnight  
 dishevelled and distraught;  
 their distressed children  
 pine for them all day.  
 Such, indeed, is the land of Dhat!  
 Praises galore to the land of Dhat!!

From *Jaisalmer Ro Jas*, 16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Five Women Friends

### CHHEEHAL

CHHEEHAL (Chihāl, 16th century) was a Jain scholar and a poet of the earlier half of the 16th century. Not much else is known about him. He is said to have authored several works, the best known of which is the *Panch Saheli* (the five women friends). The poet comes across five young women of five different communities, who all look morose and sad. On being asked what ails them, each one answers in turn. In the excerpt that follows, it is the "*malin*", the gardener's wife, who answers :

Their hair was uncombed and dry;  
 they hadn't bathed for days;  
 and their clothes were soiled.

Sunk in melancholy they sat  
heaving sighs of deep distress.  
Their coral lips were parched,  
and their faces dull and drooping.

So I went to them and asked  
what made them look so sad and unhappy;  
whereupon the gardener's wife said:

The tree of my body had blossomed;  
it bore two oranges, full delicious and juicy.  
But with the scorching winds of separation  
it withers;  
and the one who could water it  
is far away.

The pangs of separation have entered my heart  
and set it on fire;  
without my beloved throwing water on it,  
it cannot be quenched; and the flames  
keep rising ever so high.

In the garden of my body  
blossomed the flower of my heart,  
and my beloved drew in its fragrance each day;  
but now instead, each night and day,  
the anguish of separation  
makes it unbearable for me.

The lotus-face has withered,  
and the garden all around is dry and dead;  
and without my beloved,  
each moment of the day  
seems unending like a year.  
I take the petals of the champak  
and weave them into a beautiful garland;  
but if I put it around my neck  
without my beloved,  
it scorches my body like smouldering coals.

## The Song of Phatmal

ANONYMOUS

Some Jain poets of the later half of the 17th century have adopted the rhythm and cadence of this poem for their works; so it can reasonably be presumed that *Phatmal ro Geet* is a composition of some time prior to 1600.

In this poem, Ganga, a Brahmin damsel of Toda, goes to the village tank to fetch water, where Phatmal, a chieftain of Hadoti, comes to camp with his soldiers; and, smitten with love for her, decides to have her as his sweetheart. Ganga, who would want everyone to know that she is the beloved woman of Phatmal, wants him to bring her bangles and skirt and other attire befitting a bride; and extends an invitation to him to spend the night with her.

O Phatmal, you are the Rao of Hadoti,  
and I a Brahmin damsel of Toda.  
I had gone to fetch water from the village tank,  
when the Hada Rao came with his soldiers.

No one will know  
Ganga has been taken to wife.  
So get me a set of red bangles.  
I love a set of red bangles;  
get me one of real ivory;  
and get me a skirt from Agra,  
and a shawl from Sanganer.

If you stay tonight I'll cook  
an excellent jaggery porridge for you;  
if you go, I'll pack some *choorma*<sup>1</sup>  
for the journey.  
If you stay tonight  
I'll don a robe of deccan silk;  
if you go, a dark shawl will do.

But stay, my beloved,  
do stay the night;

---

1. A sweet preparation of crushed bread mixed with clarified butter and sugar.

and let this be our night of pleasure;  
at day-break tomorrow  
you may go.

Worth lacs is your beautiful moustache, O Phatmal;  
but worth crores,  
a night spent with me!

*Phatmal ro Geet*, 16th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Selections

### EESAR DAS BARHAT

EESAR DAS BARHAT (Isar Dās Bārhat, 1538-1618), was born at Bhadres, a village in Marwar. His father and mother died while he was still a child. He was brought up by his uncle, Asaji, who took him along on a journey to Dwarka, when he was 21. On their way back they stopped at Jamnagar, where they visited the court of Rawal Jam, who welcomed them with great honour and respect. While his uncle returned to Marwar, Eesar Das remained with the Rawal. The court pandit, Peetambar Bhatt, was greatly impressed with his poetic abilities, and taught him the holy scriptures and the Bhagawat Puran; and advised him to write poetry about devotion to God. He lived in Gujarat till he attained the age of 65 years. Then he returned to his homeland, Bhadres, and built a hut for himself on the banks of the Looni, and lived there for the rest of his life. He died in 1618 at the ripe old age of 80 in that same hut. He was a great poet and a greater saint, and his fame spread far and wide; and he was revered by all and held in the highest esteem by kings and chieftains and the general populace as well, throughout the country. He is believed to have wrought many miracles, such as bringing back to life Karan, the son to Thakur Beeja Sarvaiya of Amreli, when he had died of snake-bite; and Sanga Gaud, returning along with his calves at the poet's loud call, after having been swept in the river's current and taken for dead several months earlier. "Eesara so Premesara: Eesar Das and the Great God Himself are one and the same" —thus did men speak of him:

The most well-known among his poetical works are the *Hari Ras* (which sings the praises of Lord Hari, and which is even now recited as a daily prayer by hundreds of spiritually inclined men and women in Gujarat and Western Rajasthan) and *Halan Jhalan ra Kundaliya* concerning the battle between Jhala Rae Singh of Halwad and his brother-in-law Hala Jasraj of Dhroll. There are some 50 of these Kundaliyas, each one complete in itself; and as verses of *Veer Ras* there is hardly any poetry to match them.

Below are given some verses from the *Hari Ras* and three stanzas from *Halan Jhalan ra Kundaliya* :

*I*

Verses from *Hari Ras*

Even if I were a king,  
seated on a throne  
with a parasol held over my head,  
I would never for a moment  
forget your bounties;  
for, who except you, my Father,  
could have ever given me these hands,  
these eyes, these ears, this tongue?

• • •

Your life-span is like the water  
held in your cupped hands;  
and with every drawing in  
and exhaling of your breath,  
that water is slowly  
but surely trickling away.  
Without meditating on  
Hari, says Eesar Das,  
you are losing your life's opportunity  
every moment.

• • •

Almighty Lord,  
Your perfections and my flaws  
are without limit;  
Like the drops of rain  
and the grains of sand,  
they cannot be counted.

• • •

Let the pot with just water in it  
boil on the fire;  
and, O you servant of God,  
have faith in Him;  
the Lord will provide the meal for you.



Where the wind and the rays do not reach,  
 farther than the sun and the moon,  
 and the firmament that holds them;—  
 beyond them all is He;  
 and no one knows the way  
 that leads to Him.

\* \* \*

The Formless One who runs the whole show :  
 Who gave birth to Him?  
 How and whence came He?  
 Pondering this, even Brahma and Rudra  
 lose themselves in delusion.  
 No one knows anything about this mystery.

\* \* \*

Tell me of this mystery now, my Lord,  
 You who are so kind and merciful to your votaries:  
 Is it I or You, who're responsible for the original deeds  
 of sin or virtue attributed to me?  
 You, according to your one free will,  
 gave all creatures their first birth;  
 where then, O Keshav,  
 was the question of my being responsible  
 for my deeds, good or bad?

\* \* \*

O Krishna, who can ever win an argument  
 with the Great Ones?  
 But 'tis very truth,  
 it is you, O limitless One,  
 and not the soul of man,  
 that is responsible  
 for the original deeds of good or evil.

\* \* \*

O Govind, stupid and presumptuous am I  
 to question You on the Laws of Karma;  
 it is like a little frog  
 speaking of the distant lands  
 across the seas.

•

When the Seven Seas  
And the Seven Underworlds were not,  
Nor the ten Lords of the principle points of the compass;  
No Sun and no Moon;  
Nor the Mount Sumeru, or the great Serpent;  
Even then, O Lord, You were there,  
You alone were there!

• • •

When there were no circles or any angles;  
No Geometry or Geography  
No Astronomy or Mathematics;  
Even then, O Invisible One,  
You, who are beyond all desires and attachments,  
You surely were there.

• • •

When there was no birth and no death,  
Nor any living creature;  
When there were no deeds, good or bad;  
When even Lord Shiva and the lotus-throned Brahma  
Were not;  
Even then, O Great One, You were there,  
You alone were there.

• • •

The nine planets are established in the skies,  
And they have their names too;  
Unnumbered celestial worlds and galaxies  
Fill the universe;  
Even before all these came into being,  
O Giver of Salvation—the greatest of gifts,  
You were there; You alone were there!

• • •

Your prowess is unlimited,  
And unlimited You are;  
You have no beginning, and you have no end;  
You have no form, you have no line;  
You have no body, nor don any dress.

The whole Earth is Your throne;  
 the winds Your fans;  
 all the eighteen species of flora  
 offer their fragrant flowers at Your feet;  
 the clouds be the parasol  
 spread over Your head;  
 and the god of gods Shankar himself  
 sings your praises;  
 the sun and the moon are the lamps  
 swaying before You in worship;  
 the Vedas provide the auspicious and happy  
 music at Your court;  
 and the planets and all the gods  
 sing hymns and psalms to Your glory.  
 O Great One, how can mere man  
 ever hope to perform  
 any adequate service to please You?

From *Hari Ras*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## II

### The Hero of the Halas

#### 1

The lion cannot reconcile himself  
 to anyone else's being his equal.  
 He who would die fretting and fuming  
 in frenzied rage  
 at the sound of thunder from the clouds above;  
 how can he ever tolerate  
 the roar of challenge from anyone else?

Jasraj is like the lion who cannot brook  
 the thunder of the clouds in the skies.  
 How can he suffer  
 The challenging drum-beat of his foes?  
 How can he possibly sit quiet,  
 having heard the provoking thunder  
 of his enemies' drums?  
 Can the brave warrior and the lion  
 ever reconcile themselves  
 to anyone else being their equal?

2

Jaswant, the Great Eagle,  
won't fly away  
at a clap of the clang of steel.  
A loud shout can scare away  
the lesser birds  
to fly off in a swarm;  
but the brave warrior ever defies,  
like the Great Eagle,  
the threatening war cry of his foemen.

It is only the hearts of cowardly men  
that grow faint and tremble with fear.  
The clapping of hands  
can frighten away the common birds;  
but the valorous Jaswant, the Great Eagle,  
can never be scared  
by the clamour of combat  
on the battlefield.

3

Wherefore such haste,  
O vultures,  
circling in the skies?  
Just bear with me  
the while my horse is saddled,  
and I promise you  
a lavish feast on the field of battle;  
for presently, on the heads  
of my slain foemen,  
or else upon mine own body, —  
aye, upon mine own body,  
or on the heads of my foemen,  
O you red-visaged carrion-eaters,  
shall I let you descend  
and have your fill.  
Wait but the while my horse is saddled,  
says the Hero of the Halas.  
Why press on in your circling flight  
with such indecent haste?

## Some Couplets of Dadu

### DADU DAYAL

DADU DAYAL (Dādū Dayāl, 1544-1603), was born in Ahmedabad. It is said that he was found in a crib floating downstream in the Sabarmati river by one Lodhi Ram, a Nagar Brahmin, who picked him up and brought him to his home. He and his wife Vasi, who were childless, believed the infant to be a gift from God and brought him up with loving care.

He left Ahmedabad when he was 19 years of age, and travelled a good deal in Gujarat and Rajasthan; and then spent 6 years on a hill near village Kardala in Pargana Nagaur, practising intense austerities. Thence he came to Sambhar, where he lived for the next 12 years. By then he was known far and wide as a great saint, and seekers flocked to him in hundreds, and became his disciples. From Sambhar he went to Amber where he stayed for the next 14 years. It was from Amber that he was called by Akbar to Fatehpur Sikri where he daily spent hours in holy discussions with the Emperor. After a month or more at Sikri he was back in Amber. And after visiting some places in Marwar he died at the village of Naraina in 1603. It is said that his dead body was covered by a white shroud; and when the shroud was lifted, no body but just a heap of fragrant flowers was found beneath it. This was divided equally between his Hindu and Muslim followers to bury or burn as their religions required.

He was the founder of what is known as the *Dadupanth*, the Path of Dadu, and the number of his followers exceeds a hundred thousand. His *sakhis*, as his couplets are known number 2527 and his *padas* or songs, 444. A few of his *sakhis* are given below.

#### 1

Demolish the ego, and meditate on Lord Hari;  
Cleanse the mind and body of all impurities;  
And harbour no ill-will against any living creature;  
This, says Dadu, is the quintessence of my creed.

#### 2

The honey-bee covets the fragrance of the lotus;  
The melody of the hunter's flute infatuates the stag;  
And the moth is enraptured by the radiance of the candle;  
Verily so is Dadu's heart set on the Lord God Rama.

3

Let your body be scorched by the fire of separation  
Enkindled by Knowledge;  
When the flames envelop you from head to toe,  
Then will Rama come to quench it.

4

Dadu says: I saw the sun where there was no sun,  
And the moon where there was no moon;  
I saw the myriad twinkling lights  
where there were no stars;  
And my whole being was deluged with divine joy.

5

Says Dadu, I saw it rain  
Where there was no cloud;  
And where there was word-less silence,  
I heard the thunder boom;  
I saw dazzling brilliance  
Where there was no lightning;  
And my heart was filled with joy.

6

Perched on the mast of a ship,  
The raven goes far out into the sea;  
Then it flies off, this way and that;  
But weary of wing and exhausted at last,  
It returns to the ship to rest.

*Dadu Dayal ra Sakhi ra Duha*, 16th-17th century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

## Morning in Vraj

### SAINYA JHOOLA

SAINYA JHOOLA (Sāinya Jhūlā, 1575-1646), son of Swamidas, a great devotee of Lord Shiva, was born in the village of Leelchha in the state of Idar. He was patronized by Rao Viram Dev, the ruler of Idar, and after him, by his brother and

successor, Rao Kalyanmall; and was given the village Kuwaba as *Jagir* in recognition of his poetic genius. He died at Mathura. He was a great votary of Lord Krishna and all the poetry he wrote was about Him. *Rukmani Haran* and *Nag Daman* are the two famous works he is known to have authored.

The excerpt given below is a fragment from his *Nag Daman*, in which we find a very simple and natural description of a morning's activities in the village of Vraj.

"The new day has dawned;  
and the herdsmen are calling aloud  
for the cows to be milked.  
So get up quickly", says Jasoda;  
and by and by Krishna comes awake.  
And seeing the curds  
being churned in large vats,  
he asks for butter.  
Jasoda gives him  
the preparations he likes best;  
and Krishna eats them with relish.  
Having had his fill  
he washes his hands  
and rinses his mouth;  
and picks up a betel-leaf,  
made fragrant with camphor, to chew.  
Then he collects all the accessories  
needed to take the cows to the meadows.  
And he decides to proceed that day  
towards the banks of the Jamna,  
where the cows would graze  
and the cowherds play.

Hearing of Krishna's coming that way,  
groups of young women and girls  
climb on to the house-tops  
and stand there to see him pass.  
The dark-hued Krishna  
is walking through the lanes of Vraj.  
Behind him follow  
a drove of suckling calves  
and the herdboys of the village;  
and Gopis, with vermilions  
adorning the parting lines of their hair,  
look upon this procession  
with heartfelt love and joy.

Krishna drives the cows  
with shouts of "Hari Ho! Hari Ho!!"  
and the Ahiris<sup>1</sup> stand in the balconies  
to watch him go.  
Then groups of Ahiris and Gopis come to Krishna  
to commit their cows to his care.  
Some Gopis in ones and twos  
stand at the cross-lanes and say;  
"Here is my cow, O Dark One;  
take it along with you  
and take good care of it."

Thus did various other flocks  
join the large herd of Nanda's cows;  
it was like divers streams  
joining the great current of the Ganga.  
Then all the cows streamed out of the lanes  
to the open grounds outside the village  
as though the combined waters of the Triple stream  
had emptied themselves into the sea.

From *Nagdaman*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Poems about Pratap

### DURSA ADHA

DURSA ADHA (Dursā Adhā, 1533-1654), son of Meho, was born in the village of Dhundla in Marwar. When he was 6 years old his father betook to sannyas. He served a farmer for some time and then Thakur Pratap Singh of Bagri took him under his care, and gave him the best of education and upbringing. He fought along with his mentor against Rao Surtan of Sirohi on the field of Datani. While the Thakur of Bagri died in that battle, Dursa fell severely wounded. He was then taken care of by Rao Surtan, who made him his poet laureate and bestowed on him much honour and a grant of several villages of Sirohi in jagir. He was honoured in the court of Emperor Akbar also; and almost all the rulers of Rajasthan showered gifts on him fit for kings. No other poet ever amassed so much wealth as he did. He was a great poet and a great admirer of Maharana Pratap and his love of freedom. He wrote poems in praise of Pratap, and at his passing away he fearlessly recited a *chhappaya* eulogizing the Maharana in Akbar's presence; and though most courtiers thought that the Emperor's wrath would ruin him, Akbar rewarded him suitably, saying he had understood his feelings correctly.

---

1. Women folk of the community of Thirs - cowherds.



Given below are some couplets from his 'Virud Chhihotari' in praise of Pratap, a geet anent the ever defiant Maharana, and the Chhappya he recited in Akbar's court at the news of Pratap's passing away.

1

The Defiant Maharana

When mighty armies were sent against him,  
With drawn sword he'd come to meet them;  
But never came he to the Emperor's audience  
In bowed obedience to greet him.

Nor, strong and unbending, he ever made  
Any payment of tributes to the sorvereign;  
The payment he made instead was always  
Of daring assaults on his foemen.

And never tried he to meet with the monarch  
In his mansions any peace terms to settle;  
He was always ready instead with his sword  
To meet him on the fields of battle.

He was loath to let the abhorrent cry  
Of the muezzin reach his ear;  
'Twas always the priest's melodious chant  
Of vedic hymns he'd hear.

The mosque, where Moslems prayed to Alla,  
His eye shunned even to see;  
'Twas the temple he worshipped with deep devotion  
And protection to kine gave he.

Like Indra, with dark and threatening array,  
When Akbar deluged his border,  
He breasted the current of the flood undaunted  
With his customed courage and ardour.

And even in the midst of gravest peril,  
To save his lands or his life,  
He never once thought of giving the Turk  
Any daughters of his to wife.  
Foremost he stood in defiance of the despot,

The whole wide world bears witness,  
The Moslem too will deny this not,  
For two decades and no less,  
In the tyrannous times of Akbar, indeed,  
'Twas Pratap, the lord of the Hindus,  
Who preserved the people's "dharma" and remained  
The Helicon<sup>1</sup> still of the Muse.

*Ayan Dal Sabal Samuho Avai*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

2

Couplets from *Virud Chhhotari*

Be not proud, O Akbar, to think  
that you have reduced all Hindus  
to willing servitude;  
has anyone ever seen the Deewan  
bobbing his head at the balustrades  
of your royal court?

He comes not nigh Akbar,  
nor bends his neck to none;  
unwavering does he, Pratap,  
adhere to the unsullied traditions  
of his solar race.

The host of princes in his service  
are the divers stones that Akbar  
has gathered with unhindered ease;  
but Pratap, the precious piece of *paras*<sup>2</sup>,  
he has miserably failed to acquire  
despite all his toilsome striving.

Akbar is the unfathomed deep  
whose waters have swamped  
both Hindu and Turk alike;  
but Pratap, the monarch of Mewar,  
stands out alone—a full-blown lotus  
in all that watery expanse.

- 
1. Helicon – Mountain in Boetia, sacred to the Muses; source of poetic inspiration.
  2. A stone in legend and myth, whose touch was believed to have the virtue of turning iron into gold.

Akbar engulfs the land  
 like a pall of densest darkness,  
 under whose spell all Hindus save one  
 have been lulled into deep slumber;  
 it is the vigilant sentinel, Pratap, alone,  
 who stands guard,  
 wide awake and alert at all times.

Why does Akbar, the skilful charmer,  
 persist in playing  
 the many alluring tunes on his pipe?  
 For despite his straining every nerve to do so,  
 he'll still fail to entice Pratap,  
 the jewel-bearing serpent,  
 into his basket.

The Hindus who have become  
 willing slaves to Akbar  
 are but a pack of craven jackals;  
 but Pratap, the fearless lord of the jungle,  
 remains untamed and free as ever.

'Tis vulgar men  
 do wag their tongues  
 in shameless flattery,  
 like curs their tails  
 in base and lowly fawning;  
 the words of Durs  
 stem not from mean impulse:  
 of priceless mettle is Pratap,  
 the peerless one.

From *Virud Chhhotari*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

### 3

#### On Hearing of Pratap's Passing Away

You are gone, O Pratap, and no more.  
 But the whilst you lived,  
 Your steed remained unbranded,  
 And your turban unlowered in obeisance to mortal man;

Still you defied dread sovereign Akbar—  
Steadfastly from the very beginning;  
And minstrels sang of your exploits  
Throughout the land.

Never once did you go to the *Navroz* fairs,  
Nor ever to the royal camps, nor court,  
To stand in submission before the Emperor  
Beneath his balconies.  
Greatest among all you were;  
And unbeaten,—indeed in triumph,—  
O Gehlot King, you departed this world.  
At the news of your passing away, O Pratap,  
In speechless wonder  
Did the Emperor bite his lip;  
And he heaved a sigh of dismay,  
And tears welled up in his eyes.

*As Lego an dag*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Stanzas from the Nisani

### KESODAS GADAN

KESODAS GADAN (Kesodās Gādan, 1553-? ), born at Gadanan ri Basni, was a contemporary of Maharaja Gaj Singh of Marwar. He lived beyond 1644, the year in which Rao Amar Singh killed Salabat Khan in the presence of Emperor Shah Jehan and was himself killed there soon after. Kesodas has written about this episode. He wrote *Gajgun Rupak Bandh* which is his biggest and most important work in 1624. He also wrote *Rav Amar Singhji ra Duha*, *Chhand Sri Gorakhanath* and *Nisani Vivek Varta*, besides a good deal of miscellaneous poetry. He is best known for his *Nisani* from which the lines given below have been selected.

In these the poet expresses ecstatic wonder and reverence for God. He makes no distinction whatever between Ram and Rehman; indeed he sees the one in all. The whole universe—the living as well as the inert world around him—he sees as a glorious manifestation of that one supreme Being.

He is higher by far than the Firmament,  
and deeper by far than the Underworld;  
He is broader than all the wide world,  
and He is thinner than water;  
larger than Mount Meru itself,  
and of great extent;

He is lighter than Air, yet extremely strong.  
He is more tenuous and rarefied than smoke;  
He is limitless,  
extending beyond the farthest limits;  
every pore of His  
holding countless galaxies.  
That which is immovable, and all that moves is He;  
He is ethereally fine, and dense at the same time;  
Widespread is He, Alla,  
at once vertical as well as horizontal.

Without attributes You are,  
yet with all attributes too;  
transcending all attributes,  
and yet a bundle of all attributes You are;  
You have put all men  
in bondage of their actions;  
Yet You have kept Yourself  
utterly free of all bondage.  
Your decrees, O Rehman,  
may never go unobeyed.  
You, most fair and just judge,  
O King of all Kings,  
Who could ever be greater than You?

You have instilled fragrance in the flowers,  
and oil in the sesame seeds;  
implanted fire in flint and iron and wood;  
and milk in the udders of cows.  
And in all the eight limbs of the body,  
made of the five elements,  
You have infused the spark of Life,  
which is the wonder of all creation.

Those who haven't striven to seek  
must needs not find;  
but those who have sought diligently,  
invariably have.  
And of those who have,  
none ever confined  
the abode of Alla  
to any one particular place;

For they saw Your beauty shining  
in every form and image of the world.  
Indeed Your beauty  
fills every nook and corner  
of the whole universe.  
O Great One, it was You  
who took on the form of the Great Fish  
and the Great Conchshell;  
it was You again  
who took on the form of the Great Tortoise  
and slew the demon Mur.  
The Great Boar too were You;  
and You, O Alla,  
the demon king Hiranyakashyapu,  
and the Great God Narasimh who destroyed him.

You were the Brahmin dwarf Vaman,  
and You the great King Bali  
who put Himself in His bondage;  
You, both the thousand-armed Sahasra Bahu,  
and the fearsome Parashuram,  
the wielder of the battle-axe;  
You again, Lord Rama as well as the demon King Ravana;  
the cowherd Kanha and the cruel Kamsa too were You.  
Form and Formless at once  
You pervade every atom of the Universe.  
Whichever way I look I see You  
as the warp and woof of all creation;  
You and You alone are there.  
This truly is all I know.

*Nisani Vivek Varta*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Man-Lion Slays the Demon King

NARHARIDAS

NARHARIDAS (Narharidās, 1543-?), son of Barhat Lakkha, was born in Telha, a village in Merta Pargana of Marwar in 1543.

Besides his major work the *Avtar Charit* (Avtār Charit) in which he narrated, in 16000 verses, the stories of all the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, he is known to have written *Amar Singhji ra Duha* and other miscellaneous poetry as well. He could write in *Dingal* (Rajasthani) as well as in *Pingal* (Vrajbhasha).

The excerpt given below is taken from the story of the *Narasimha Avtar*, (Vishnu's Incarnation as the Man-Lion). Prahlad, the son of Hiranya Kashyap, the Demon King, was a great devotee of God. His father wanted him to give up his devotion to God and learn the arts and sciences which traditionally belonged to the demons. When he didn't give up his single-minded devotion to God, the Demon King subjected him to various tortures like being thrown down from a high cliff, put in a hut made of wood and set fire to, and thrown before an inebriated elephant to be trampled upon and killed. But by God's grace he always survived unscathed. At last his father decided to kill him himself. He put an arrow to the string of his bow and was about to shoot it at him when the Lord emerged in the fearsome form of the Man-Lion from a pillar split apart, and killed the Demon King to save Prahlad. The dialogue of the father and the son and the description of the splitting apart of the pillar and the emergence of the Man-lion is some of the most powerful poetry one could come across.

Flaming with anger the King then said:

"If there be any Almighty God  
who you think will protect you,  
call for Him now.

Let us see Him who is your protector.

What does he look like?

His form? His hue?

And Prahlad said:

"In the water He is,  
and in all this earth;  
in the wood of the trees,  
and in the rocks as well.

He is reflected  
in all the forms that we see,  
and beyond them all  
in the void of the firmament above".

Whereupon the King said:

"You say He dwells in the stones also!

This pillar that supports the ceiling,  
is this not stone?

If your Hari resides in stone too,  
call for Him

to come out of this pillar at once".

And Prahlad said:

"That my Lord is there  
in this pillar also  
is perfectly true.  
There isn't an iota of untruth in this.  
And if I call Him with all my heart,  
I am sure He will come."

"What is the use of calling Him  
with all your heart  
if He doesn't turn up before you die?  
Do you really hope to see Him now  
even as I shoot this arrow  
through your heart?

Of what use could it be  
even if it rained milk  
when all one's kith and kin  
have left for distant lands;  
when one's wife has abandoned one's love;  
when the crops have withered,  
and the cattle are all dead?

I am bending my bow  
to shoot this arrow at you;  
in a trice it will pierce your heart  
and take your life.  
Then what will your God do?  
The physician arriving  
after the dying man is dead  
would be useless."

It was the fourteenth day  
of the waxing moon  
in the month of Vaisakh;  
the sun was setting—  
half its orb  
visible above the horizon,  
half gone under.  
It was at that moment  
when it was neither day nor night,  
that Prahlad cried out aloud  
for his Lord to come and protect him.



And anon came an answering awesome rumble  
from somewhere deep below,  
as if from the very bowels of the earth;  
the stone column shuddered visibly  
and a wide crack  
ran down its entire length  
from top to bottom.

And now the palace itself,  
nay the whole earth, rocked  
as thought caught in a wild  
and violent convulsion,  
and the heart of the demon king  
was filled with terror.

And then with a thunderous roar  
the column split apart,  
and there emerged from within it  
the incarnation of the Lord  
in the impossible form of the Man-lion, Narasimha.

The gnashing of His teeth  
made a dreadful noise,  
and the sight of His savage fangs  
was frightful to behold.  
His three eyes burned  
with the brilliance of the Sun  
and the Moon and Fire.  
And when He opened  
his great jaws in a wide yawn,  
His red tongue  
loll'd low out of His mouth.

An angry scowl on His visage  
made it look hideous;  
and the ochre-hued hair of His mane  
stood up all around His massive head.  
His arms, with powerful paws  
and adamant claws extended.  
were upraised,  
and His lashing tufted tail  
curled up high above His head.  
Such was the awesome aspect  
of the terrible Man-lion.

Emitting blood-curdling growls,  
 He pounced on the Demon King  
 and knocked him down with a mighty blow;  
 and picking him up quickly  
 He laid him across His knees  
 as He sat Himself down  
 in the middle of the palace door  
 on its threshold.  
 And He tore open the demon's belly  
 with His ripping claws,  
 and slung his entrails over His shoulder,  
 where they dangled  
 like some gruesome garland  
 around His neck.

From *Avtar Charit*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Rao Ratan Addresses his Warriors

### JAGGA KHIDIYA

JAGGA KHIDIYA (Jagga Khidiya, 17th century) was a court poet of Rathor Ratan Singh of Ratlam. He is famous for his *Vachanika Rathor Ratan Singhji Mahesdasot ri*, in which he describes the battle of Dharmat (near Ujjain) fought between the combined forces of the rebel princes Aurangzeb and Murad on one side and the imperial army of Shahjehan led by Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar on the other, on 16th April, 1658. Jagga is said to have taken part in the battle, fighting alongside his patron. Thus the *Vachanika* may be said to be an eye-witness account of the battle. It is written partly in prose and partly in verse.

On the evening before the battle, Ratan Singh assembles all his warriors, and speaks to them words which boost their resolve to fight unto death as befits true warriors. Then follows the description of the battle proper. When the tide seems to be going against the imperial army, Jaswant Singh is prevailed upon to leave the battlefield; and Ratan Singh assumes command of the imperial army in his stead and fights on to the very end, when he finally falls pierced by 300 arrows, and stricken with 80 other wounds all over his body—26 of spears and the rest of swords.

Jagga commenced writing the *Vachanika* soon after this battle, and finished it by 1660.

The excerpt given below is the speech which Ratan Singh makes to the assembled warriors on the evening before the battle.

Then the generous-hearted warrior Raja Ratan, stroking his moustache and raising his sword firmly held in his hand, spoke thus: In times gone by great wars were fought at Lanka and Kurukshetra. The gods and the demons fought and died. The stories have remained extant throughout the four aeons. Valmiki and Veda Vyas narrated them in the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. Now this third great war is here, to be fought on the field of Ujjain. The great guns will thunder. The terrible winds of war will sweep over the field. Kings mounted on elephants, with parasols over their heads, will fall together with the elephants. The Hindus and the Yavans will fight. The hour of the decisive battle, in which the warriors must do or die, is upon us. The imperial armies comprising both Hindus and Yavans are arrayed against each other. Delhi has entrusted the burden of the battle to the strong arm of the Rathors. The grand occasion that the Vedas and Shastras speak of has come. The battlefield of Ujjani! The bath in the holy river of the sharp-edged swords!! Remember our duty to our master. Let the Rajput's steadfast loyalty to his duty be proved. We must be prepared to give and take the many heavy blows of the sword and the spear. To the clang of clashing swords in the combat let us move like the dancers of the *dandiya gehar*<sup>1</sup>. With relentless strokes of our swords we must push back and scatter the elephant array of the princes. We must strike at the parasols held aloft over their heads. We must continue to fight till we are cut to pieces and fall. Why, what say you Barhat Jasraj?

Well said, Maharaj. May God Almighty fulfill your noble aspirations! May your dauntless valour and your resplendent glory shine forth in all the world! We shall fight on till we are cut to pieces and fall before you.

From *Vachanika Rathor Ratan*  
Singhji Mahesdasot ri, 17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## A Description of Udaipur

MUHTA NAINSI

MUHTA NAINSI (Muhtā Nainsī, 1610-1670), the author of the famous *Khyat*, was born in the Oswal Community, took up service with Maharaja Gaj Singh of Marwar in 1632, and went on to be appointed as the Hakim of Phalodi in 1637. In 1657 Jaswant Singh appointed him as the Deewan of Marwar which post he continued to hold till the year 1666. Right from 1650 through 1665 Nainsi assiduously collected and collated material for his *Khyat* from various sources. Such a comprehensive account of the genealogies and histories of the divers ruling dynasties of Rajasthan and Gujarat is nowhere else to be found. The battles fought, and the names of the men who fell fighting; the forts, towns, hills and

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1. A popular group dance.

rivers — they are all there in the *Khyat*. The histories of the Chauhans, Rathors, Kachhwahas and Bhatias are dealt with in great detail. And though factual errors have crept into them, especially in the earlier accounts, most of his writings pertaining to the history of Rajputana 1600 onwards are by and large authentic and accurate. *Marwar ra Parganan ri Vigat* is another voluminous work compiled by Nainsi.

The short excerpt given below is an example of his prose—mature and fluent Rajasthani, eminently suitable for narrative writing.

To the north from Machhla Magra lies the city. The palaces of the Deewan stand on the brink of the Peechhola Lake. Westward from the palaces and adjacent to the lake is the city spread out in a circumference of some four miles. On the side of the city stands the Machhla Magra; and on the other side to the north-west, the hills of Sweesarwa. When a lot of water flows into the lake, it reaches right up to the foot of the hills. The volume of water flowing into the lake from the Machhla Magra and the hills of Seesarwa is very large indeed. The lake itself is very big. Crocodiles live in it; and it is very deep. There is a sluice which is opened to release the water for irrigation. The water flowing out of it reaches round an extensive area of land, from which accrues a great amount of revenue.

From *Muhta Nainsi ri Khyat*, 17th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Rains Have Come

DWARKADAS DADHWADIYA

The son of Madhudas Dadhwadiya, the famous author of the *Ram Raso*, DWARKADAS DADHWADIYA (Dwārkādas Dadhwādiyā, 1678-?) was a contemporary of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Marwar and served as an officer in his army. He wrote the *Dawawait Maharaja Ajit Singhji ri* in 1715. It is mostly written in poetic prose interspersed with about a dozen *duhas* and a few *kavitts*. The Maharaja rewarded him with a grant of the village of Vasni as jagir.

He wrote a good many miscellaneous geets as well. The example given below is the advent of the monsoon season:

The peacocks are calling aloud in the hills;  
they spread their gorgeous trains  
and dance in joyous ecstasy;  
and the raucous croaking of frogs  
fills the ponds and pools of the countryside  
that have been replenished by the rains.

The thirst of the woodlands has been quenched;  
 the gods have been kind;  
 the cuckoos pour forth their dulcet melody;  
 and the low hanging clouds rest on the mountain-tops.  
 The west wind blows a steady breeze;  
 the scorching paths are now cool;  
 and the land all around is clothed in velvet green.  
 The monsoons are here, my liege,  
 and my beloved wife  
 pines for me in my distant home.  
 O Ajit, Lord of Maroo, consider all this,  
 and grant me leave to go home.

*Varsalai ri Rut ro Geet*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Two Poems

DHARM VARDHAN

DHARM VARDHAN (1643-1723) was a scholarly poet and wrote his *Shrenik Chaupai* in 1662 when he was only 19 years old. His other major works include *Amarsen Vayarsen Chaupai* and *Sur Sundari Ras*. He also wrote many miscellaneous verses on a variety of subjects such as *neeti*, the changing seasons and heroes like Durgadas Rathor and Shivaji.

The first poem that follows deals with the effects of old age on various types of people; and the second with the vain desire of men to hold on to possession of land for all time.

*i*

### Old Age

The king, his chancellor,  
 the physician and the sage:  
 age helps develop  
 their worthiness to excellence;  
 for these four, old age  
 is an ornament.  
 But for the wrestler, the courtesan,  
 the servant and the singer,  
 old age is a scourge;  
 with all their skills sharpened with use,  
 disdain and indifference

is all they get from the world.  
That is what  
the advent of old age  
does to these four.

*Budhapo*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

*ii*

Who Can Own the Earth For Ever?

How many have possessed  
this earth?  
And how many more  
will hold and enjoy it?  
And die saying  
"Tis mine, 'Tis mine",  
like piedogs fighting  
over discarded leaf-plates?

How many have wrested it  
from others  
to ravish and hold for a while?  
like the washerman  
the stone slab on which he washes his laundry,  
uttering "*Hoon Pat, Hoon Pat*"<sup>1</sup>  
every time he brings down  
his washing with a thwack  
on to the stone?

This earth, how many husbands  
has it had?  
How many openly?  
how many unrevealed?  
A whore this earth has always been,  
as all can see.  
And the kings who would  
hold it for ever,  
their struggles indeed  
have all been in vain.

---

1. "I'am the master! I'am the lord!!" With a little imagination one can almost hear these words "*Hoonpat, Hoonpat*" in the sound of the forced expulsion of breath every time the washerman brings down his laundry on to the stone.

The discarded leaf-plate,  
 the washerman's stone,  
 the whore, and the earth:  
 such is the nature of these four;  
 those who think, "They are mine"  
 forsooth are deluded fools.

How, says Dharmsi, can anyone hope  
 to be master of the earth for ever?

*Dharti ri Dhaniyap Kisi*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Advent of Spring in Marwar

VEERBHAN RATNU

VEERBAHN RATNU (Virbhān Ratnū, 1688-1735), one of the well-known poets of the 18th century, was born in Ghadoi, a village in Marwar, and was a contemporary of Maharaja Ajit Singh and his successor Abhaya Singh. His most important work is the *Raj Rupak*, in which he has given a detailed account of the events in the times of Maharaja Jaswant Singh and his successors. Ajit Singh and Abhay Singh. He has given the dates and the names of the people who took part in the events as well as the places where they occurred, which are historically accurate. He dwells at greatest length on Maharaja Abhay Singh's campaign in Gujarat against Sarbun land Khan. Like Karni Dan, the author of the *Suraj Prakash*, Veerbhan too had accompanied Abhay Singh on this campaign and fought alongside of him in 1730.

After voluntarily taking on himself the onerous task of crushing the rebellion of Sarbuland Khan, Abhaya had moved to Jodhpur, where he stayed for a few months. Veerbhan describes the various seasons during his stay there, and mentions the fact that he married four princesses before moving on to Ahmedabad.

The excerpt given below is an example of his description of nature in the season of spring, and its influence on men and women.

With the advent of Phagun  
 the sun is moving across Aquarius;<sup>1</sup>  
 its salubrious rays  
 have become welcome to all;  
 and a steady wind  
 blows in from the west.

---

1. The eleventh of the twelve zodiacal constellations in the sky.

The whole world is cheered  
by the coming of this month.  
The limpid waters and their reduced flow  
gladden both, the rivers as well as their banks.  
The days as well as the nights  
are now more pleasant.  
The extreme cold of the winter is gone;  
and the ears of the wheat crop  
are filling fast with grain.

During the nights men and women  
indulge with gay abandon  
in the delights of love's dalliance;  
and women sing ribald songs  
with unbridled glee.  
The days and nights are filled with song  
to the accompaniment of lilting tunes  
played on the flutes  
and the rhythmic beat of the *chang*.

As with a benign king to rule over them  
the hearts of his subjects  
are filled with happy contentment,  
so with spring in the air,  
the whole countryside  
seems to be filled  
with an exuberance of gladness and joy.  
Even when sometimes  
they speak with anger to their children  
the parents only wish them well;  
in the same way though the spring wind  
sometimes blows hard and raw,  
it only nourishes the trees and the shrubs  
to help them burgeon  
with new shoots and buds.

The music and joy of spring  
pervade every nook and corner of the land,  
including the places of worship  
and the abodes of holy men.  
And saffron-coloured water



and red powder  
 are sprinkled all around,  
 which delights the heart of the king.  
 Playing Holi in joyous merriment,  
 men deluge one another  
 with bucketfuls of water  
 impregnated with the redolence  
 of saffron and camphor, ambergris and musk.  
 The beauty of spring is at its height;  
 a profusion of burgeoning blossoms  
 adorns the mango trees;  
 and delightful roses and other flowers  
 are woven into beautiful garlands  
 and worn around the neck.

Such is the daily diverting festivity  
 that Abhay Shah, the Lord of Navkoti Marwar,  
 finds most gratifying to his heart.  
 Dhanesh, the god of wealth,  
 would long to look upon his pleasures;  
 and Indra, the king of the gods, himself  
 would proclaim his unstinting praise for them.

From *Raj Rupak*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Maharaja Abhaya Volunteers to Take on Sarbunland

### KARNI DAN KAVIYA

KARNI DAN KAVIYA (Karnī Dān Kaviyā, c. 1685-1780) was born at Dogri in Jaipur. He studied Sanskrit, Prakrit, Dingal and Pingal poetry at Amber around 1700. Then he went to Shahpura where he stayed with Raja Ummaid Singh. After the death of Ummaid Singh, who died fighting against the Marhattas at Ujjain, he went to Dungarpur, and later to Udaipur. And later still, at the request of Maharaja Abhay Singh of Marwar, he came over to Jodhpur where he lived for the greater part of his life, and was an esteemed poet at Abhay Singh's court. He accompanied Abhay Singh in his campaign to Amhedabad in 1730, to crush Sarbuland Khan, who had rebelled against the Emperor and set himself up as an independent ruler of Gujarat. In that same year he wrote the *Suraj Prakash* (7500 verses) in which, after tracing the origin of the Rathor Dynasty and narrating briefly an account of the rulers of Marwar, he dwells on the exploits of Abhay Singh. He also wrote an abridged version of this voluminous work, *Virad Singar*. He was much honoured and rewarded by Abhay Singh, who conferred upon him the village of Alawas in jagir. He also wrote *Abhay Bhushan* and *Yati Rasa*, and

much miscellaneous poetry. Later he went to Kishangarh where he was greatly welcomed by Maharaja Bahadur Singh, the ruler of that principality, and where he lived for the rest of his life.

In the selection made from his poetry given below are kaviits from his *Suraj Prakash* describing Abhay Singh's volunteering to take upon himself the onerous task of leading an army against Sarbunland Khan to quell his rebellion.

Then both, the Bakshi and the Vazir, spoke thus :

"Your Majesty, let the General Assembly be called tomorrow,  
and let the betel-roll be taken round  
to all the Rajas and the Khans  
for voluntary acceptance of this onerous task".

When the night was passed and the day had dawned,  
all were assembled in the hall of general audience.  
The Emperor sat on his throne,  
and had the betel-roll brought in.  
And he said, "Let him who has the courage  
and confidence to take on Sarbunland  
come forward.  
He who would hold the falling firmament in his arms,  
let him step forward and take the betel-leaf".

The Emperor's betel-roll was then taken around.  
Many were the hearts  
that trembled at its approach;  
many dared not even  
to look upon it with a level eye;  
As Tuzuk Mir carried it around,  
most great warriors  
merely said, "Pass on to the next one";  
Except for Abhmal, the hearts of all  
the Hindus and Moslems in the audience hall  
were drained of their wonted courage.  
That day the weight of Mount Meru  
seemed verily to have descended  
into that betel-roll.

With their limbs all trembling,  
they come forward to take the betel-roll;  
but as their eyes meet those of Tuzuk Mir,  
the Khans lose their nerve;  
the pride of the Moghuls and their customed ardour  
to plunge into battle is blown away  
as if by a gust of wind.

And seeing the betel-roll they turn back  
like an elephant confronted by a lion.

All the other Hindus and Moslems despaired,  
except Abhmal, who stood like Ram  
in Sita's *Swayamvar* organised by Janak;  
the betel-roll of the Emperor of Delhi  
had become the great bow of Shankar<sup>1</sup>

Neither the Moslem Khans and Nawabs  
nor the other Hindu Rajas would dare  
to take the betel-roll from the hands of Tuzuk Mir  
The Rathor holding his sword in his hand  
alone looked steadily upon it.  
And the Emperor said,  
"One hope only remains for me now."  
And then,  
when all stood hanging their heads in shame,  
seeing the Emperor sad and forlorn,  
Raja Abhay extended his arm  
and picked up the betel-roll.

And holding it in his hand,  
the Rathor stroked his moustache and said;  
"Have no anxiety, Your Majesty,  
and order festivities and merriment;  
I'll have him sent to you in chains,  
or else his severed head.  
I'll trample his Moghul forces into the dust.  
He may flee the field to save himself;  
but I'll uproot that petty scoundrel  
from Ahmedabad in a single day;  
and stripping him of his power and prestige,  
like a tree of its leaves,  
drive him toward Delhi."

Hearing this the Emperor said,  
"O Maharaja, your great grandsire  
Gaj Singh has been a great king;  
and it was with the strength of his arm

---

1. Extremely heavy bow which none except Rama could budge an inch at the time of Sita's *Swayamvar*.

that the Emperor Jahangir  
 was able to slay Kunwar Bheem of Mewar  
 and make Shahzada Khurram flee the field of battle.  
 He fought and plundered the Deccan  
 and established his sway over it.  
 He won many battles,  
 and honour in ample measure,  
 and put Delhi in eternal obligation to himself.  
 O Abhay Singh, great scion of that great family,  
 my honour and my throne now  
 rest entirely in your hands."

From *Suraj Prakash*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Husband who was a Coward

BANA

BANA (Banā, 18th century) was a resident of village Kotadi in Marwar and wrote his poetry some time in the earlier half of the 18th century. He was an adept at writing scathing sarcastic verses such as the ones that follow; Umaidan, the Chandawat wife of Rawal Indra Singh of Raesar, is speaking here to her maid-servant about her husband's cowardice.

The Chandawat Lady  
 told her maid to make haste;  
 "Run", she said "and put  
 the cooking pots on the fire.  
 The guns of the Deccani have thundered  
 on the battlefield;  
 now the Rawal will come soon."

With folded hands  
 and a knowing smile on her lips  
 the maid said, "It is a battle, my Lady;  
 how could you be sure  
 of his coming so soon?"

"He didn't stay to fight  
 on the field of Bassi;  
 nor again at Khatu.

From such accounts I know him well;  
 from the fields of battle  
 my husband always flees,"  
 so said the Lady Umaidan.<sup>1</sup>  
 "Let us get on with the cooking", she said,  
 "and look for him from the roof-top  
 along the path from the field of battle.  
 He will abandon his sword  
 and his steed to the foe,  
 and, barefoot, running come home!"

She knew her husband well  
 and she cooked the food for him;  
 and such indeed was her husband's haste  
 that Inda<sup>2</sup> arrived  
 ere it was half-cooked!

*Kayar Pati ro Geet*, 18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## The Fort and its Keeper

ANONYMOUS

It happened during the reign of Maharaja Vijay Singh of Marwar. Vijay Singh was at Nagor. The Marhattas had invaded Marwar. Champawat Surat Singh was the *Kiledar* — the keeper of the Fort of Jodhpur. Vijai Singh sent a message to him with Bhura, a tailor: "Abandon the Fort of Jodhpur, and come over to Nagor". Surat Singh wouldn't hear of it; and when Bhura insisted that the Maharaja's order had to be obeyed, Surat Singh lambasted Bhura, calling him "a dog" and pointing it out to him that while Bhura's children could always make a living plying the needle anywhere in the land, his (Surat Singh's) children could not even show their faces in Marwar, if he were to commit such a cowardly deed as desert the Fort.

In the first geet given below, it is Surto, (Surat Singh), speaking to the Fort; in the second, it is the Fort replying to its commander.

### 1

Stroking and curling his moustache with pride,

---

1. Ummaid Kunwar, Indra Singh's Chandawat wife.

2. Indra Singh.

and gripping his sword by its hilt,  
 "O silly Fort", says Surto, its commander,  
 "fear not, and rest assured;  
 for the warrior who'd place his foot on your head,  
 must step on my own head first."

"Have no trepidations, O Fort  
 with embattled bastions,"  
 says the scion of Harind;<sup>1</sup>  
 "Promptly and with zeal,  
 my sabre upraised,  
 I'll scatter the foemen on the field.

With my sovereign not here,  
 if anyone should dare  
 to tread on your head, O Fort,  
 he must die by my hand,  
 or kill me first,  
 and over my own head pass".

"Have no fears, O Fort", says Surto,  
 "and watch my prowess as I cut the enemy;  
 for only the one who slays me first  
 and tramples over my head,  
 will ever be able to take you."

Surto, the Rathor, has yoked this fort  
 to his head, determined to defend it;  
 inseparable now it is  
 like the jewel from the serpent's hood,  
 or the crescent moon  
 from the great God Shiva's forehead.

The hordes of the Deccan must swallow their pride,  
 and depart homeward to the south;  
 and may King Vijpal reign untrammelled,  
 shining with the brilliance of the Sun.

---

1. Hari Singh, Swart Singh's father.

## 2

With Surto resolved to defend it, the Fort  
 became fearless and firm as Meru;  
 "Unshakeable now I'll remain", says the Fort,  
 "Blame me not for my earlier frailty;  
 For that blame must go to my keepers."

"I adore thee, O whiskered unbending warden",  
 says the soaring Fort with lofty towers;  
 "It is only when their keepers are craven and cowardly,  
 that forts are weak and vulnerable;  
 with keepers bold and valiant,  
 forts too become daring and dauntless."

O scion of Hari Singh,  
 you, ornament of the earth,  
 strength of your sovereign,  
 heir to the glory of Balloo,—  
 Yea, a second Jaswant,  
 verily have you filled me  
 with pride and ardour—  
 me, the fort that was drained  
 of all its spirit".

"O great warrior,"  
 says the Fort of Jodhpur again and again,  
 "You who are the swoop of Death itself  
 for your foemen, O valiant Champa,<sup>1</sup>  
 Lifting up your sword in defiance today,  
 you have washed me clean of my tarnish  
 that the cowards had daubed on me".

*Kila Aur Kiledaran Geet*, 18th-century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

1. An abbreviation of Champawat, which is a clan of Rathor Rajputs.

## Do Good Unto Others

OPA ADHA

OPA ADHA (Opā Adhā, ?-1799) was a contemporary of Maharaja Vijai Singh of Marwar, 1752-1793., and a direct descendent of the famous poet Dursa Adha, the 7th in his line of generations. The year of his death, however, is well established; Sanyī Dīn, a contemporary poet, in one of his couplets, lamenting the deaths of Thakur Mahesh Das of Padiv, and Opa Adha of Peshwa, has called the year 1799, an evil and accursed one for having taken away two of the noblest men from the Land of Abu. Both Padiv and Peshwa are villages of Sirohi; and Sirohi is the Land of Abu.

Opa is famous for his poems of devotion. The geet given below exhorts men to shun harsh words and bickering. It reminds them that their days are numbered and passing swiftly by; and that they should therefore employ all their time now in doing good deeds and singing the praises of Lord Hari.

Do good unto others, O men, if you can;  
and gather the merits of human life.  
You are guests here only for a few days;  
do not therefore break your peace  
with anyone around you.

We have to go one day, we have to go!  
Understand this well, as be wise;  
and bear this always in your mind.  
For a mere two days then.  
O visitors from distant lands,  
why embitter life around you with harsh words?

We think of tomorrow, and the day after,  
and the next;  
and thus imperceptibly do the days of our lives  
pass away.  
And just as we talk about others today,  
even so will others talk about us  
when we are gone.

So shrink not like the receding waters  
of a shallow pond;  
but keeping profoundly serene and sober,  
sing always of Lord Hari's praises;  
For tomorrow, or the day after, surely, O Opa,



the days of our lives shall have gone;  
— swiftly and suddenly, like a clap of the hands.

*Kar Jano to Koi Bhalai Kariyo*, 18th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Couplets Addressed to Rajiya

### KIRPARAM KHIDIYA

KIRPARAM KHIDIYA (Kīrpārām Khidiyā, 1743-1833) was born at Jusari in Pargana Parbatsar of Marwar. His mother committed *sati* in 1750. He was highly esteemed at the court of Ravraja Lakshman Singh of Sikar, who gave him the villages of Lachchhipura and Dhani, now called "Kirparam ri Dhani", as jagir. He is famous for his *Sorathas*, which he addressed to his personal attendant, Rajiya. Very popular and widely known as *Rajiya ra Soratha* which may well be said to be a distillation of worldly wisdom. Some of his *sorathas* are given below:

1

Disease, fire and conflict  
stemming from disaffection:  
these should be nipped in the bud;  
for once they grow, O Rajiya,  
they are apt to get out of control;  
And then there is no stopping  
the damage they'd do.

2

Go not here and there  
bemoaning your misfortunes, O Rajiya;  
Crying over your miseries  
won't arouse anyone's sympathy;  
And none will help you out  
with his wealth.

3

Try a thousand tricks, O Rajiya,  
all clever and skillfully done;  
but honest goodwill

and deceitful guile  
cannot remain unseen for ever.

4

Men are honoured for their  
innate nobility,  
not for empty outward show.  
The whole world worship Shiva, O Rajiya,  
though all his body is soiled  
and smeared with ashes.

5

A whole life-span though a Persian-wheel<sup>1</sup>  
works night and day;  
it is but an hour's downpour  
from the clouds on high, O Rajiya,  
that deluges the whole countryside.

6

The powerful strokes  
of heavy hammers and crowbars  
make no dent on the mountain rock;  
but through a hardly discernible  
hair-line fissure, O Rajiya,  
a tiny alpine flower  
can send its tender roots  
deep into it.

*Rajiya ra Soratha*, 18th-19th century

Tr. by Kesri Singh

## Two Poems

### SAGRAMDAS

SAGRAMDAS (Sagrāmdās, 18th-19th century) was a disciple of Murli Ram who died in 1801. He is famous for his *kundaliyas*, of which he wrote about a hundred, toward the end of the 18th century. Two of his *kundaliyas* are given below:

1. A device for irrigating the fields.

## 1

## The Arduous Ascent of Meditation

O Sagram, the crossing  
 of the high pass of meditation  
 is arduous and full of hazards.  
 Our own sins are the highwaymen  
 who stand in the way  
 with stout staffs in their hands  
 blocking our progress.  
 Advance but a step, and they strike you hard  
 on the nape of your neck.  
 Alas, your efforts for earning merit  
 in this world  
 have been sluggish.  
 And very difficult indeed  
 is the ascent over the high pass of meditation.

*Bhajan ri Kardi Ghati*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

## 2

## The Hostile Dames : Gossip and Sleep

Listen, O friend, says Sagram,  
 how can I hope  
 to immerse myself in meditation  
 with these two hostile dames  
 chasing me all the time?

What two dames do you speak of Brother?  
 The one, Sister Gossip, gives me no respite  
 during the day-time;  
 the other, Sister Sleep, in the nights.  
 Lured astray by them  
 I have lost my life's little hut.  
 O friend, how can I hope to employ myself  
 in deep meditation on the Lord?

*Din ra Vatan Behan*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Kesri Singh

# Medieval Sanskrit Literature

## The Life of Lord Shiva

### MANKHA

MANKHA (Maṅkha, 12th century) is the author of *Shrikanthacharita* (Śrīkaṇṭhacarita), a *mahakavya* in 25 cantos, written in 1140. He was the son of Viswanatha, variously known as Mankhaka or Mankhuka and his work is well-known among Kashmiri Shaivites. It has been commented on by Jonaraja, the celebrated author of *Jonarajatarangini*. His *Mankhakosha* is also a renowned Sanskrit thesaurus.

*Shrikanthacharita* presents an interesting description of the destruction of the three demons Tarakaksha, Kamalaksha and Vidyunmali—collectively termed as *Tripuras*—by Shiva. There is undoubtedly a conspicuous display of stylistic and linguistic as well as poetic and aesthetic excellence in it.

The following excerpts are from the different cantos of *The Life of Lord Shiva*.

i

The first canto consists of salutations:

May Shankara, the Lord of the Universe, and  
for whom the Ganga though residing on his crown  
is performing circumambulation through her  
constantly flowing stream of water, protect you all !

•

May the moon, the king of constellations,  
as if reciting the three Vedas like a Brahmin  
through the resonance of the word Kapala arising from the air  
beating against the waves of the Ganga, protect you !

•

May he, who is the chamberlain of the whole creation  
of Lord Brahma and its sustenance,

who is the first warrior of Lord Shiva,  
and who holds five arrows, protect the world !

•

"The abode of flowers is Spring!  
Resorting to its blossoming limbs,  
we shall attain joy", so thought the bees.  
May Spring with its body  
blackened and occupied by six-footed bees,  
hungry and greedy for its juices,  
generate eternal bliss in your hearts.

•

All these poets defiled indeed  
the priceless creations of speech  
by displaying and selling them, as it were,  
on the outskirts of the market, the courts of kings.  
By me, the poet Mankha, speech is employed only  
to sing of the Lord whose chamber is Mount Kailasa  
at whose feet the pollen is wiped away  
by the jewels decorating the crest of Indra.

*ii*

The second canto describes the good and the bad men:

Even if he is constantly  
in the company of good people,  
a crooked man does not  
abandon his nature.  
Could Rahu, having taken refuge with the Sun,  
join the line of the gods?

•

Lacking in jewels of excellent meaning  
and overwhelming beauty of letters,  
how can they attain supremacy among poets  
by mere stylistic use of words,  
like poor people lacking in jewels  
and gold and possessing only brass.

Instantly could others locate an error of negligence  
in a poet's creation that is utterly pure.  
How could a stain of soot be seen  
on a sullied unwashed garment?

*iii*

The fourth canto describes Mount Kailasa:

There is Mount Kailasa  
scattering its lustre bright like the moon,  
the laughter of the quarters of the god of wealth,  
and the abode of Shiva.

•

It looks resplendent with hares  
reflected in its clear crystal mounts,  
made as if with heaps of moons  
by the Creator out of curiosity.

•

Embracing the sky,  
its rays, with their translucent beauty,  
serve as the stalk to the  
lotus-seat of Brahma.

•

Residing though on the crest of Shiva,  
the moon does not abandon its love,  
for living on the waves of the ocean,  
due to its association with the torrent of beams.

•

With its rays dancing on all sides,  
it shines, as if drawing  
on the faces of the directions  
marks of beauty with camphor.

*iv*

Canto five is a description of Lord Shiva:

Whose eyes did not he (Shiva) uplift for long  
 from the fleeting flurry of grief  
 by begetting a body with multiple motion  
 through the fusion of male and female forms.  
 Where even the crescent moon, concealed partially  
 by the gleam of the emeralds of Parvati's head-ornament,  
 resumed androgyny as if in union with his beloved night.

•

Along with Parvati, the daughter of the mountain,  
 Shiva performs every evening the mystic dance,  
 rendering the two bodies into one.  
 Adorning Shiva the right half  
 the weary serpents with fallen hoods,  
 inhale air coming  
 from the mouth of the enfeebled Parvati the left half.

v

The sixth canto gives a general description of Spring:

End of the fasting period of bees!  
 end of the jealous anger of ladies!  
 With its banner of flowers has opened up  
 The time auspicious to the joys of love.

•

Among the six expedients  
 Of the god of love,  
 Spring alone is the scholar.  
 Other seasons are unable even to open  
 The knot of the books of love.

vi

The tenth canto describes an evening:

With effort, the water lily-buds resort to blooming  
 as it gives pain to young ladies in separation  
 due to the overflowing of sweet juices abounding in poison  
 in the form of filaments of the blowing lotuses  
 as they bear the beauty of the planks

of the extended hoods of the love-cobra, that is  
restless on account of the absence of the evening breeze.

The orb of the moon blackened by its spots,  
placed in the hearth of the sky where  
the fire of evening light is burning,  
has been rendered into a new silver-pot  
by the god of love for boiling the hearts  
of the beloveds of the travellers.

vii

The eleventh canto gives a description of the moon:

O king of the night!  
How can a tender-bodied person  
tolerate your rays whose touch  
makes even slabs of the moonstone melt away.

O moon, friend of lovers!  
This must indeed be your influence,  
as you stay on Shiva's crest,  
that the androgynous is unacquainted  
with the pangs of separation from Parvati.

viii

The sixteenth canto describes a morning:

In the ocean, water recedes  
and so does the moon in the sky.  
The breeze is full of the warm sighs  
of the ruddy goose in separation.  
The five beams in sun-gems,  
and the sun on the rising mountain,  
the earth and heaven before the eye's region,  
thus manifest your different forms, O Shiva!

The morning completed a devotional worship to Shiva,  
with his moon-orb-head bowed down from a distance



with the quick offerings of the flowers of stars,  
 with the singing of the hymns by rows of chirping birds,  
 and with the earthen lamp in the form of the sun  
 held in the plate of the sky.

*ix*

The last canto concludes the poem with various ideas.

Oh, fortunate I am  
 Whose learning though self-willed  
 Did not utter praise of any one  
 Except Shrikantha.

•

Human birth, learning,  
 Poetic skill and praising Shrikantha:  
 Oh, this is a great line of virtues!

•

When a learned listener of sympathetic  
 disposition strives after poetic speech,  
 then this creeper of words sheds nectar  
 of asthetic joy at every point.

•

This ripe work of poetry pleases,  
 paying, as if, salutations to the Lord,  
 of all that moves and moves not,  
 through words with twisting forms, and  
 performing, as if, the great ritual  
 of the extensive ablution of Shiva through its  
 flowing streams of pure aesthetic joy (*rasa*)  
 that is sweet like the juice of sugar-cane.

•

In dream, having heard a command  
 from his father residing in the world of Shiva  
 Mankha is, at heart, delighted to compose  
 this poetic work praised excessively by  
 experts for its flawless form and flow.

## Selections

### BILHANA

BILHANA (Bilhaṇa, 12th century), was the son of the grammarian Jyeshthakalasha and Nagadevi. He was born at Konamukha in Kashmir. His works include *Vikramankadevacharita* and *Chaurapanchashika*.

Excerpts from these two are given below:

#### 1

### The Life of King Vikrama

*Vikramankadevacharita* (Vikramāṅkadevacarita) is one of the most popular story-books of India, which has come down to us mainly through oral tradition. There are a lot of problems regarding its original version and authorship. But it can be said with fair certainty that it was composed during 11th-12th century. The work is variously known as *Simhasanadvatrimshika*, *Vikramacharita*, *Vikramarkacharita*, *Vikramadityacharita*, *Simhasanakatha*, or *Simhasanadvatrimshatkatha*.

Thirty-two stories depict the character of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain as an ideal Hindu ruler. The following episodes, abridged and translated, will show the multifarious activities of the king, full of valour, alertness, kindness and selflessness.

#### i

The following is from Section II of the work and tells the story of King Bhartrhari and the fruit that gave immortality.

There was a city named Ujjayini, bestrewn with all good things, and surpassing Indra's abode (heaven) in excellence. In it was king, a man whose two majestic feet were reddened by the vermilion from the foreheads of all his vassals' wives, Bhartrhari by name, skilled in all the arts and knowing all the sciences. His younger brother was named Vikrama (Valour), for by his own valour he took away the valour of his foes. This Bhartrhari had a wife named Anangasena, who surpassed the nymphs of heaven (apsaras) by her beauty, loveliness, and other excellences.

In this city there was a certain brahman, who knew all the books of science, and had an exceptional acquaintance with charm-text-books; yet he was a pauper. By the performance of incantations he propitiated the Queen of the Earth (Parvati). She, being propitiated, said to the brahman: "Brahman, choose a wish". The brahman said: "O goddess, if you are pleased

with me, then make me immune to old age and death". Then the goddess gave him a divine fruit, and said: "My son, eat this fruit, and you shall be immune to old age and death".

Then the brahman took that fruit, and went back to his own house; and when he had bathed and performed divine service, before he ate the fruit this thought occurred to his mind: "How now! After all I am a pauper; if I become immortal who will be help by me? No, even if I live a very long time I am bound to do nothing but go abegging. Now even a short life, if a man be a benefactor of others, amounts to something (literally, is for the better). Moreover, he who lives but for a very short time, blest with intelligence and high position and such advantages, his life it is that bears fruit...

If with this idea in mind this fruit should be given to the king, he, being immune to old age and death, would be a righteous benefactor to all the four castes". Accordingly he took the fruit and came into the king's presence...

And giving the fruit into the king's hands he said: "O king, eat this matchless fruit, which was obtained by the favour of a goddess's boon, and you shall be immune to old age and death".

So the king took that fruit, and gave him many grants of land, and dismissed him. Then he reflected: "Now, by eating this fruit I shall have immortality. But I am extremely fond of Anangasena; and while I am still alive she will die. I cannot endure the pain of separation from her. So I will give this fruit to Anangasena, who is as dear as life to me". So saying he called Anangasena, and gave it to her. But this Anangasena had a groom as lover, and she in turn, upon meditation, gave the fruit to him. And there was a certain slave-girl, who was best-beloved of this groom; and he gave it to her. But the slave-girl was in love with a certain cowherd, and gave it to him. But he in turn had a great passion for a girl who carried cow-dung, and gave it to her.

Now this girl was carrying cow-dung outside of the city, and had placed the basket of it on her head and thrown that fruit on the top of the basket; and as she was coming along the king's highway, King Bhartrhari was going a hunting with the princes. And when he saw that fruit placed on the top of the load of cow-dung on her head, he took it, and turned about, and came back to his dwelling. Then he called the brahman and said: "Brahman, is there any other fruit like that which you gave me?" The brahman replied: "O king, that was a divine fruit, obtained by the favour of a goddess's boon; there is no (other) fruit like it in the world. Moreover, the king, surely, is like God himself, and no falsehood must be spoken before him; he must be regarded even as a deity".

Then the king said: "How if a fruit of that sort makes its appearance?"

The brahman replied "Was this fruit eaten or not?" The king said: "I did not eat the fruit, but gave it to my dearly beloved consort Anangasena". The brahman said: "Then ask her whether she ate that fruit". Then the king called Anangasena, and making her swear an oath asked of her. And she replied: "I gave the fruit to the groom". Then he, being summoned and questioned, said he had given it to the cowherd, and he to the girl who carried cow-dung. Then, when the king became fully aware of the truth, he was plunged in the deepest sorrow.

. . .

"There is no greater happiness than renunciation; no other bliss than knowledge; no other savior than Vishnu; no greater enemy than the round of existence".

Speaking this stanza Bhartrhari attained to complete renunciation of the world; and establishing Vikramarka in the kingship, he himself went into the forest.

*ii*

The following extract from Section IV deals with Vikrama's gratitude tested by Devadatta.

While Vikramaditya was king there dwelt in that city a certain brahman, who was learned in all branches of knowledge and adorned with all virtues, but had no offspring. One time his wife said to him: "My dear lord, the learned in tradition say that a householder cannot get along (or cannot go to heaven) without a son.

And so:

The moon is the light of night; the sun is the light by day; religion is the light of the three worlds; a good son is the light of the family.

So speaking the brahman undertook the Rudra-rite in order to win the favour of the Supreme Lord.... The Lord became propitiated through the performance of that rite, and gave him a son. Straightaway the brahman performed the birth-ceremony for this son; and on the twelfth day he gave him the name of Devadatta, and afterwards he performed for him all the important rites from the rice-feeding to the marriage.... Having repeatedly impress upon his son the advice as to conduct, he himself went to Benares. But Devadatta remained in that same city, respecting his father's counsel.

One day he went into the jungle to gather firewood for a sacrifice. And

while he was cutting the wood, King Vikramaditya came into the forest to hunt, and in chasing a boar entered the jungle. Not knowing the way to the city, and seeing Devadatta, he asked him the way to town. In response to his question Devadatta himself went before and guided the king to the city. Then the king richly rewarded Devadatta and appointed him to a certain office. After this a long time passed. And one day the king said: "How can I pay back the favour which Devadatta did for me, in that he guided me from the midst of the great jungle back to town?"

When the brahman heard these the king's words, he reflected in his heart: "Well, the king says thus and so; but is it true or false? Let us put it to test". So saying he took the king's son without any one's knowledge, and concealed him in his own house. And putting one of the prince's ornaments in the hands of a servant, he sent him into the midst of the city to sell it. Meanwhile a great uproar arose in the king's house: "Some robber has slain the prince!" And the king sent forth his officers in all directions to search for his son. When they looked in the middle of the market-place, there they saw Devadatta's servant with the ornament in his hands. Recognizing the ornament as belonging to the king's son, they bound the man and took him into the king's presence, and demanded: "Villain, how did this ornament come into your hands?" Said he: "The brahman Devadatta gave it to me; I am his servant; he sent me forth telling me to sell this ornament in the market-place and bring him the money". Then the king summoned Devadatta too and said to him: "Devadatta, who gave you this ornament?" Devadatta replied: "No one gave it to me; in my covetousness I myself killed your son and took his ornaments, and gave this one from among them into this man's hands to sell. Now do what seems best to you; thru the power of my past deeds my character has become what it is". Thus he spoke and bowed his head. When the king heard his words he was silent.... The ministers said: "Let him be cut up into a hundred pieces and his flesh fed to vultures". Hearing their words the king said: "Councillors, this man is at my mercy, and he is also my benefactor, because he once showed me the way to the city.

Now a noble man ought not to take account of the good or bad qualities of those who are dependent on his mercy"...

So speaking he said to Devadatta: "Devadatta, have no fear whatsoever in your heart. My son was struck down by the over-mastering natural power of karma [deed]. What wrong have you done? For no one can overcome the natural power of karma"..... He comforted Devadatta, and gave him garments and ornaments and other gifts, and let him go. But Devadatta brought back the prince and gave him to the king.

*iii*

The following passage from Section IX tells the story of the fair courtesan who was visited by a demon:

While Vikrama was king his vizier was Bhatti, his sub-vizier Govinda, his general Chandra, his house-priest Trivikrama. This Trivikrama had a son Kamalakara, who lived by the indulgence of his father, eating gruel with ghee, adorning his body with garments, jewelry, betel, and the like, and devoting himself to sensuous pleasures. One day his father said to him: "For shame, Kamalakara! How is it that you, though you have obtained birth in the brahman caste, have thus become the slave of your desires?.... Moreover, this is the time for you to study and acquire knowledge; if you do not acquire knowledge at this time, later you will suffer great grief.

. . .

After Kamalakara heard these his father's words he became filled with remorse, and said: "I will never look upon my father's face again until I have become all-learned". So saying he went to the land of Kashmir. And there he came to the teacher Chandramauli Bhatta, and prostrating himself before him said: "My lord, I am a stupid fellow, who hearing your worship's name have come to study and acquire knowledge. Have mercy on me, and bring me into the possession of knowledge, noble sir". So saying he prostrated himself again. And when the teacher agreed, he followed his instruction day and night.....

And finally one time his teacher took compassion on him and expounded to him the Charm of Perfect Knowledge. By learning this Kamalakara became all-learned, and taking leave of his teacher returned to his own city. On the way he arrived at the city of Kanchi, where Anangasena was king. In this city there was a certain woman named Naramohini, who was incomparably beautiful. Whoever looked upon her became inflamed with the fever of love and came into a condition of frenzy. But whenever any one slept with her to enjoy her, a certain rakshasa [demon] dwelling in the Vindhya Mountains was wont to come and drink his blood, so that he died. Kamalakara, having seen this strange thing, went to his own city. And his parents and other kinsfolk, when they saw him back again, held a great feast. On the second day he went with his father to the king's residence. [He narrated the incident of Naramohini to the king].

Then the king said: "Come then, Kamalakara; we two will go thither". So the king came with him to the city of Kanchi, and saw the beauty of Naramohini, and was amazed. And he went to her house, and was hospitably

entertained by her with washing of the feet, and with ointments, perfumes, and flowers....

Then she offered him betel. Thus the first watch of the night went by; and Naramohini went to sleep. In the second watch the rakshasa came; and when he looked at the couch of Naramohini, there she lay asleep all alone, and there was no one else. But as he was going out again the king halted him and slew him. Hearing the noise thereof, Naramohini awoke, and seeing the rakshasa slain she greatly rejoiced, and praised the king, saying: "O king, by your favour I am freed from danger; from now on the persecution of the rakshasa is at an end. How can I repay you for this favour you have done me? For the rest, I will do whatever you say". The king said: "If you will do as I say, then favour yonder Kamalakara". So Naramohini gave herself to Kamalakara. And Vikrama returned to Ujjayini.

*iv*

This passage from Section XII tells the story of the spendthrift heir, and the woman tormented by an ogre.

In the reign of Vikramarka there was in his city a merchant named Bhadrasena, who had a son Purandara. And there was no end to the wealth of this Bhadrasena; yet was he not a squanderer. Now in the course of time Bhadrasena died, and Purandara inherited all his father's property, and began to waste it extravagantly as is customary at his time of life. Once upon a time his close friend Dhanada said to him: "Purandara, although you are of a mercantile family, you waste your money like a scion of the high nobility. This is not a mark of one sprung from a merchant's house. A merchant's son, even though quite alone, should amass wealth, and should not waste so much as a cowry."

\*     \*     \*

But Purandara proceeded to waste all his father's goods. And then, when Purandara had no more money, his friends and relatives esteemed him no more, and would not even associate with him. Consequently he went into a far country. And as he wandered he came to a certain city located near the Himalaya. And not far from this city there was a grove of bamboo. And he himself came to the outskirts of the town, and slept at night on a bench in someone's house. And at midnight he heard the shrieks of some woman crying in the bamboo grove: "Good people, save me, save me, some rakshasa here is killing me!" Having heard these cries, early in the morning he asked the people of the town: "Good people, what is this in the bamboo grove here? Who is the woman that cries by night?" And they said: "Every night the sound of these cries is heard there in the grove. But every one is afraid

to go and find what it is". Then Purandara returned to his own city, and went to see the king... He told the king the story of the bamboo grove. And hearing of this strange occurrence the king set out with him for that city. And hearing at night the sound of the woman's wailing in the bamboo grove he went into the grove, and saw a very hideous rakshasa in the act of murdering a helplessly screaming woman. And he said: "Wretch, why do you kill a helpless woman?" And the rakshasa said: "What is that to you? Go your own way, or you shall die a useless death at my hands". Then they two fought, and the rakshasa was killed by the king. Then the woman came and fell at the king's feet and said: "My lord, by your grace the limit of my curse had come; you have brought me out of a great ocean of misery." And the king said: "Who are you?" And she replied: "Listen. In this very city there was an extremely rich brahman. His wife was I; but I was wanton and cared nothing for him, although he had a great affection for me. And I, having overweening pride in my beauty and charms, would not come when he bade me lie with him. Therefore, having been tormented with love all his life, at the time of his death my husband curst me, saying: 'Look now, O wicked and perverse woman! Since all my life I have been tormented because of you, accordingly a hideous rakshasa that lives in the bamboo grove shall come and enjoy you, much against your will, every night, and shall slay you'. Thus he cursed me. But I prayed for a limit to the curse, (saying): 'Nay, my lord, grant a limit to the curse'. And he said: 'When some man endowed with great valor and devoted to the service of others shall come hither and kill the rakshasa, then the limit to your curse will come'. Thus have I been freed from the curse through you. Now I am at the point of death; and I have nine jars full of gold, which will be wasted. Do you take them". So speaking she told the king the place where the gold was; and her life left her. But the king gave the nine jars full of riches to the merchant Purandara, and returned with him to Ujjayini.

v

This passage from Section XVII narrates the tale of how Vikrama offers himself for his rival's benefit.

There was no one possessed of such magnanimity and other virtues as Vikrama. By reason of this magnanimity his fame was spread abroad throughout the three worlds. All petitioners praised only this king. Moreover, the blessings of petitioners are sweet in the ears of generous men, rather than of heroic men.



One time in another or a hostile land a certain panegyrist recited a hymn of praise of Vikrama before another king. Hearing this hymn of praise that king became jealous, and said to the panegyrist: "O bard, why is it that all the panegyrists praise only Vikramarka? Is there then no other king than he?" The bard said: "O king, there is no king in the three worlds like him for generosity, service of others, courage, and heroism. To do a service for others he grudges not even his own body". Hearing these words this king determined that he too would engage in the service of others. And calling an ascetic he said: "O ascetic, is there any way of providing ever new wealth each day, for the purpose of serving others?" And the ascetic said: "O king, there is no way". The king said: "If there is any way tell it to me, and I will carry it out". The ascetic said: "Well, on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month perform homage to the band of the sixty-four witches (yogini), and after celebrating the preliminary rites before them with a hymn, make the tenfold offering. And at the end of the offering, by way of complete oblation, sacrifice your own body itself in the fire. Then the band of witches will be propitiated, and will give you whatever you ask". Hearing this the king carried out the instructions in full, and at the time for the complete-oblation threw his own body into the fire. And the band of witches was propitiated, and gave the king a new body, and said: "O king, choose a wish". The king said: "O mothers, if you are propitiated, cause the seven great jars which are in my house to be filled with gold every day". And they said: "If for the space of three months you will sacrifice your own body thus in the fire every day, we will do as you ask". The king said: "So be it", and continued to offer his body in the fire every day.

One time king Vikramarka heard a report of this; and going to the place, at the time of the complete-oblation he threw himself into the fire. And the witches said to one another: "Today the human flesh is much sweeter than usual, and the man's heart is very sound and good". And when they had brought him to life again they said: "Great hero, who are you? What purpose have you in sacrificing your body?" He replied: "I have offered my body in the fire in order to serve others". The witches said: "Then we are satisfied with you; choose a wish". The king answered: "If your ladyships are satisfied with me, let this king here be released from the great pain which he suffers by reason of his daily death, and let his seven great jars be filled with gold". The witches consented, saying "We will do so". So they saved that king from death, and filled his jars with gold. And king Vikrama returned to his own city.

## vi

The following passage from section XXIV narrates the story of a strange inheritance involving Shalivahana and Vikrama:

In Vikramaditya's kingdom there was a city named Purandarapuri. Here dwelt a certain rich merchant, who had four sons. In the course of a long time this merchant, having grown old, fell sick; and at the time of his death, he called his four sons and said: "My sons, after I am dead, whether you four live in the same place or not, in time there will arise a quarrel among you. Therefore before my death I have made a division of property among you four, in order of age. Right here under the four feet of my bed I have buried the four portions; take them in order, from the oldest to the youngest". And they agreed to do this. Now when the father had departed this life, the four brothers lived in harmony for a month. But then a quarrel arose among their wives. And thereupon they reflected: "Why this quarrel? While our father was still alive he made an allotment for us four; so we will take the allotted property as placed under his bed, and actually getting our parts we shall live in peace". So digging under the bed, they brought forth from under its four feet four copper vessels. Of these there was earth in one vessel, coals in one, bones in one, and straw in one. Seeing these four things, the four brothers were greatly perplexed. They came to Ujjayini, and went into the king's council, and told of the matter of the allotment before the king and the council, but the king and the council did not understand the way of allotment. After this they came finally to the city of Pratishthana, and told the nobles of that place; but they also did not know the solution. At this time Shalivahana was there in the house of a potter. And hearing that matter he came forward and said to the nobles: "These four are the sons of one rich man. While their father was still alive he made an allotment for them in order, from the oldest to the youngest, in the following way. To the oldest he gave earth: that means, he gave (him) all the land which he possessed. To the next he gave straw: that is, he gave (him) all the grain which he had. To the third he gave bones: that is, he gave (him) all the cattle that he had. To the fourth he gave coals: that is, he gave (him) all the gold that he had". Thus the problem of their allotment was solved by Shalivahana, and they went to their own city content.

But when king Vikrama heard how this allotment had been solved, he was astonished, and sent a letter to the city of Pratishthana, (inviting Shalivahana to visit Ujjayini. But Shalivahana was reluctant to visit Ujjayini). Said he: "What sort of a king is Vikrama? I will not go at his summons. If he has any business with me, let him come himself; I have no business with him"... (Then the king angrily marched for) the city of Pratishthana, and beleaguered it. And he sent messengers to Shalivahana, who came to Shalivahana and said: "O Shalivahana, King Vikrama, the overlord of all kings, summons you; so come and see him". And Shalivahana said: "Messengers, I will not

see the King alone; surrounded by a complete army of the four parts, on the field of battle will I see Vikrama. Let your honors tell the king this". Hearing these words the messengers repeated them even thus to the king. When he heard this King Vikrama came forth to the battle-field to fight. But Shalivahana took some clay in the potter's house, and made with it elephants and horses and chariots and foot-soldiers, and brought them to life with a charm; and with this four-fold army he went out from the city and came to the field of battle.

. . .

A terrible battle took place, and Vikramarka destroyed the army of Shalivahana. And Shalivahana was much dejected; but remembering the boon given him by his father, saying "In time of distress call upon me", he called to mind his father, the serpent-prince Shesha. Shesha sent forth all his serpents, which stung the whole army of Vikramaditya, so that they were completely paralyzed and fell upon the battle-field. Thereupon King Vikrama returned alone to his city; and in order to bring his army back to life, he stood in water up to the waist for the space of a year, and recited prayers to Vasuki (another serpent-king). After this Vasuki became satisfied with him and said: "O king, choose a wish". The king said: "Serpent-king, if you are propitiated, then give me a jar of nectar to bring to life my army, which is paralyzed by the power of the serpents' venom". Vasuki consented, and gave him a jar of nectar. And King Vikrama took the jar of nectar; and as he was on the way back a certain brahman came up to him. Then the king said: "O brahman, whence have you come?" The brahman said: "I come from Pratishtana-city". The king said: "What have you to say?" The brahman replied: "Your majesty is a wishing-stone for all petitioners, since you are able to give any good thing desired. Now I have a desire for a certain good thing; if you will grant it, then I will tell you what it is". The king said: "I will give you whatever you ask". The brahman said: "Give me the jar of nectar". The king said: "By whom were you sent?" The brahman replied: "I was sent by Shalivahana". Hearing this the King repeated: "Since I first said to him 'I will give it', if I now do not give it, it will be a disgrace and a sin. So by all means I must give it". The brahman said: "O king, why do you hesitate? You are a righteous man, and a righteous man's promise is not taken back".... The king said: "You have spoken truly. Take the jar of nectar". So saying he gave it to him; and the brahman went to his own place, praising the king. And the king returned to Ujjayini.

*vii*

This passage from section XXX tells the story of the clever mountebank.

Once King Vikrama, attended by all his vassal princes, had ascended his throne. At this time a certain magician came in, and blessing him with the words "Live forever!" said: "Sire, you are skilled in all the arts; many magicians have come into your presence and exhibited their tricks. So today be so good as to behold an exhibition of my dexterity". The king said: "I have not time now; it is the time to bathe and eat. Tomorrow I will behold it". So on the morrow the juggler came into the king's assembly as a stately man, with a mighty beard and glorious countenance, holding a sword in his hand, and accompanied by a lovely woman; and he bowed to the king. Then the ministers who were present, seeing the stately man, were astonished, and asked: "O hero, who are you, and whence do you come?" He said: "I am a servant of Great Indra; I was cursed once by my lord, and was cast down to earth; and now I dwell here. And this is my wife. Today a great battle has begun between the gods and the demons, so I am going thither. This King Vikramaditya treats other men's wives as his sisters, so before going to the battle I wish to leave my wife with him". Hearing this the king also was greatly amazed. And the man left his wife with the king and delivered her over to him, and sword in hand flew up into heaven. Then a great and terrible shouting was heard in the sky: "Ho there, kill them, kill them, smite them, smite them!" were the words they heard. And all the people who sat in the court, with upturned faces, gazed in amazement. After this, when a moment had passed by, one of the man's arms, holding his sword and stained with blood, fell from the sky into the king's assembly. Then all the people, seeing it, said: Ah, this great hero has been killed in battle by his opponents; his sword and one arm have fallen". While the people who sat in the court were even saying this, again his head fell also; and then his trunk fell too. And seeing this his wife said: "Sire, my husband, fighting on the field of battle, has been slain by the enemy. His head, his arm, his sword, and his trunk have fallen down here. So that this my beloved may not be wooed by the heavenly nymphs, I will go to where he is. Let fire be provided for me". Hearing her words the king said: "My daughter, why will you enter the fire? I will guard you even as my own daughter; preserve your body". She said: "Sire, what is this you say? My lord, for whom this body of mine exists, has been slain on the battlefield by his foes. Now for whose sake shall I preserve this body? Moreover, you should not say this, since even fools know that wives should follow their husbands. For thus it is said: Until a wife burns herself in the fire after the death of her husband, so long that woman can in no way be (permanently) freed from the body."

. . .

Thus speaking she fell at the king's feet, begging that a fire be provided for her. And when the king heard her words, his heart being tender with

genuine compassion, he caused a pyre to be erected of sandalwood and the like, and gave her leave. So she took leave of the king, and in his presence entered the fire together with her husband's body. And the sun set. On the morrow when the king had performed all his morning duties and ascended upon his throne, attended by all his vassal princes and other attendants, that same prince came in, sword in hand, tall and with shining form as before, and put upon the king's neck a garland woven of flowers from the heavenly Tree of Wishes, which was thick with a swarm of bees delighting in their fragrance. And conveying to the king the greetings of Indra he began to converse with him variously about the fight. And seeing him arrived all the council was amazed, and the king was amazed also. And again he said: "O king, I went from this place to heaven, where there was a great battle between Indra and the demons, in which many demons were killed, while some got away in flight. After the battle God Indra said to me graciously: "O prince, it is a long time since I have seen you. Where have you been this long time?" Then I said: "My lord, because of your curse I have been dwelling these many days upon earth. Hearing that today a battle was in progress between my lord and the Daityas, I came hither to help'. Thereupon Great Indra's heart was much pleased, and he said: "O prince, from today on go no more to earth; your curse is lifted, I am satisfied with you. Take this golden bracelet, studded with the nine jewels'. So speaking he took his bracelet from his own hand and himself put it upon mine. And I replied: 'My lord, at the time when I came hither I left my wife in charge of Vikramarka; so I will fetch her and return immediately'. Thus speaking to Indra I came hither. Now you treat other men's wives as your sisters; so give me this my wife, and I will go with her again to heaven". When the king heard these words he was amazed, and did not reply. And again he said: "O king, why do you sit silent?" The people who stood about the king said: "Your wife has entered the fire". He said: "Why?" Then they also were silent, knowing not what to reply. Thereupon he said: "O king, jewel of kings, you who treat other men's wives as your sisters, tree of wishes for all suppliant folk, Prince Vikrama, live forever! I am the magician, and this that I have shown you was a trick of juggler's art". The king was astonished. And at that time the treasurer came in and said: "O king, the king of Pandya has sent his tribute to your majesty". The king said: "What has he sent?" And he said: "Lord, listen attentively.

Eight crores of gold, ninety-three weights of pearls, fifty burden-bearing elephants, the perfume of whose rutting-fluid is the delight of bees; three hundred horses, and a hundred courtezans skillful in manifold arts; all this, O most noble King Vikrama, the king of Pandya has sent to your majesty".

Then the king said: "O treasurer, let all this be given to the magician". So he gave him all of it.

*viii*

This is the story of Vikrama and the vampire (vetala) from section XXXI.

While Vikramarka was ruling, one time a certain naked ascetic came in, and blessed the king, saying: "O king, on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month Margashirsha I intend to perform a sacrifice in a great cemetery. Now your majesty is both a benefactor of others and a great hero; so be my assistant thereat". The king said: "What must I do?" Said the ascetic: "Not far from this graveyard there is a shami tree, upon which hangs vetala (vampire). You must bring the vetala to me, in silence". The king promised that he would do it. On the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month the ascetic took his stand in the great cemetery, with the articles for performing the sacrifice. And at dead of night the king too went to the cemetery, and the ascetic showed him the way to the shami tree. Coming to the shami tree by that path he took the vetala on his shoulder; and as he was returning on the way to the cemetery, the vetala said: "O king, to relieve the weariness of the road let some tale be told". The king made no reply, fearing to break the silence. The vetala said again: "O king, you will not tell a story through fear of breaking the silence. So I will tell a story; and at the end of the story, if you know the answer to the question I shall ask, and yet do not speak through fear of breaking the silence, then your head shall be split into a thousand pieces". So speaking he told a story: "Hear, O king!

On the south slope of the Himalaya there is a city named Vindhyavati. Here dwelt a king named Suvichara, who had a son Jayasena. One time the prince went into the forest to hunt. And in the forest, seeing a certain elephant, he pursued after it, and entered the jungle. And when by some means or other he arrived at the road to the city, and was coming back upon it alone, he perceived a certain river in the middle of the forest; and there on the bank of the river a certain brahman was performing a religious ceremony. The king's son went up to him and said: "Brahman, hold my horse there while I take a drink of water". The brahman replied: "Am I then your servant, that I should hold your horse?" Then the prince struck him with his whip; and the brahman ran howling into the king's presence and told the king. And the king's eyes were inflamed with anger, and he commanded to expel his son from his dominions. At this juncture a minister said: "Sire, why do you cause your son, who is well fitted to assume the responsibilities of kingship, to be expelled from your dominions? This is not seemly". The king said: "Minister, this is seemly; since he struck with his whip the person of a brahman, therefore he is not a fit person (to rule). A prudent man should not incur the enmity of brahmans".

Then he ordered: "O minister, let the hand by which the brahman was struck be cut off". So as he was about to have his son's hand cut off, just then the brahman came in and said: "O king, your son acted thus because of his ignorance, and from now on he will commit no further impropriety of this sort. For my sake let the youth be spared; I am now appeased". Hearing his words the king released his son; and the brahman returned to his own place.

Having told this story the vetala said: "O king, of these two which was the more virtuous?" King Vikrama said: "The king was the more virtuous". Hearing this, because the silence was broken, the vetala returned to the shami tree. But the king returned thither again and put him upon his shoulder; and as he was coming back the vetala again told a story. In this way twenty-five stories were told by the vetala. Thereupon the vetala became propitiated, perceiving his clever wit, skill in the arts, compassion, courage, magnanimity, and other virtues. And the vetala said to Vikramaditya: "O king, this naked ascetic is endeavoring to kill you". The king said: "How?" The vetala replied: "When you shall bring me thither, he will say to you: 'O king, you are very tired, so now turn your right side to the sacrificial fireplace (and pass around it so), and make a complete prostration, and then go to your own place'. And when you are bent over making the obeisance, then that naked ascetic will slay you with a sword, and will make a sacrifice with your flesh. And in this offering he will make me into a brahman, and by so doing will obtain the eight magic powers of minuteness and so on". Vikrama said: "What shall I do?" The vetala replied: "Do thus. When the naked ascetic tells you to make obeisance and go, this is what you must say: 'I am a universal emperor; all the kings make obeisance before me, but I have never made obeisance at all. So, I do not know how to make obeisance. You do it first, and show me, and when I have seen it, afterwards I will do it'. Thereupon when he bends over to make obeisance, you cut off his head. I will make an offering for you, and the eight magic powers shall be yours". Thus instructed by the vetala King Vikrama did even so. And the vetala, becoming himself a brahman, had an offering made, and made the complete oblation with the head of that naked ascetic. And the king received the eight great magic powers. Then the vetala said: "O king, I am satisfied with you, choose a wish". The king replied: "If you are satisfied with me, then raise up that naked ascetic from the dead; and whenever I shall call upon you, do you come". The vetala agreed, and raised up the ascetic, and went to his own place. But King Vikrama gave those eight great magic powers to the ascetic, and went to his own city.

## 2

## Lamentations of a Lover Thief

The CHAURAPANCHASHIKA (Caurapañcāśikā), a lyric poem comprising fifty verses, each beginning with the phrase *adyāpi* (even now), is attributed to Bilhana. The poem is believed to be a part of a larger work entitled *Bilhanakavya* or *Bilhanacharita*; also it is variously known as *Chaurashataka*, *Bilhanashataka*, *Bilhananataka*, *Chaurasuratapanchashika*, or *Adyapi*-verses. It presents a separated lover's recollection of his mistress's beauty and the pleasures of love.

•

Even today, I remember my beloved, glowing in garlands of golden champaka flowers, with her face like a fully-blossomed lotus and the line of fine hair at her waist. After waking from sleep, her body trembled with desire for love. I think she has been lost by me in the same way as knowledge is lost through sheer recklessness. (1)

•

Even today, if again I see my moon-faced darling bursting with newly-acquired youthfulness, having full breasts, glowing complexion and body tormented with fire produced by the arrows of the God of Love, I shall quickly cool her limbs. (2)

•

Even today, I remember her during our love-making when her body became inert with fatigue, her curly tresses fell on her pale cheeks and her soft arms clung like vines around my neck, as if trying to hide the secret of our guilt between ourselves. (4)

•

Even today, I remember her. The glittering pupils of her big eyes danced widely when she became aware by my love, and resembled a wild goose in the lotus-pond of passion. At dawn she stooped her face in modesty. (5)



Even today, I remember my darling's face of that moment when golden ear-rings grazed her cheeks during the process of her playing a reverse amorous role and large pearl-like beads of perspiration produced by the exertions of rhythmic movement dropped down from it. (12)

•

Even today, I remember the secret rendezvous with my beloved when her braid became loosened, the garlands wilted, her lips had a nectar-sweet smile, strands of pearls caressed her full, pointed breasts and she looked at me with wistful eyes. (17)

•

Even now, I brood on that incident when rays of light from jeweled lamps dispelled the darkness of her white chamber giving me a chance to look secretly at her and thus making her eyes fill with shame and fear. (18)

•

I still remember my beloved's hundreds of timidly whispered, sweet and flattering words whose sense was somewhat spoiled when they came out tumbling because of her trembling in exhaustion after love-making. (21)

•

Even now, when I know that my end is drawing near, my mind involuntarily dwells upon her in awe, instead of dwelling on the gods. What am I to do? My only thought is, "She is my beloved! She is dearer to me than anybody else! She is mine!" (27)

•

Even now, I painfully recollect that on hearing of the pronouncement of my death sentence, her eyes became restless like those of a frightened deer, her voice quivered, tears started rolling down from her eyes and her face bent down by heavy grief. (28)

Even now, my haunted mind dwells upon that forbidden young girl who is the hope of my life. She is full of the essence of fresh youth which has not been enjoyed by anybody else. May she become my fortune in the next life too!

(33)

•

Even now, I remember her angry face when after having made up her mind to go, she silently gave me her mouth, and started crying bitterly after being kissed by me. I fell at her feet, (saying) "My love! I am your slave. Love me."

(36)

•

Even now, I do not know whether she is the spouse of a god or is a celestial dancer brought down on the earth because of the curse of Lord Indra. Was she created by Brahma to tantalize the world, or was his own desire of beholding the jewel of maidenly youth responsible for her creation?

(38)

•

Even today, nobody in this world can make a true painting of her as none has ever seen her equal in beauty; she revealed herself to me alone. Only a person who has seen another equally beautiful (maiden) may perhaps be able to do so, but none else should even try.

(39)

•

Even today, I think that the king's daughter, with languidly dancing eyes full of youthful spirit, was perhaps a child of some celestial singers, demi-gods, celestial musicians or snake-gods and had unfortunately fallen from heaven.

(45)

•

Even today, I can no longer endure being deprived of the favours offered by my dearest. Brothers, only death can cure me of my sufferings. Therefore, I beseech you to cut my head quickly.

(49)

## Counsels

### JALHANA

MUGDHOPADESHA (Mugdhopadesā) is a didactic poem composed by the poet Jalhana (12th century). These verses are about prostitutes who make love to the infatuated young men for the sake of money only.

An important man does not have any desire; women of bad character do not have any modesty; sands do not contain any water; fortune does not have stability; agnostics do not have any faith; an intoxicated person does not have any glory. In the same way, whores generally do not possess even an iota of affection. (9)

•

A person who expects shade from the clouds, goodness from the wicked, increased stature by begging, fame by being a miser, friendship from treachery, happiness from dependence, virtue by killing animals, money from gambling and gratification from whores, is not a man; he is an ox in the form of man. (19)

•

There is no one so blind as an ignorant man. No one can be as unhappy as a slave. There is no disease more terrible than tuberculosis. There can be no worse cause for mental anguish than a bad son. No terror is greater than the fear of death. There can be no suffering greater than unfulfilled desires. There is no enemy worse than another's wife. And there is nothing more despicable and detestable than a whore in the whole world. (20)

•

Treachery is her father; sixty-four arts, her mother. Whatever is evil is her life. The main aim of her life is grabbing other people's money. She sells her own body with the active abetment of the God of Love. There is no cure for this root-of-many-evils disease called a whore. (28)

•

"My lord, I am only your slave. Whatever I have is all yours. My cruel lord, don't leave me. I consider the whole world desolate without you"—

when a whore suddenly starts crying out such things even before a snake,  
then you should understand that she thrives on the left-overs of others and is  
after their money. (45)

From *Mugdhopadesha*, 12th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Kings of Kashmir

### KALHANA

RAJATARANGINI (Rājatarāṅgini), a verse chronicle of Kashmir, composed in a sequel of four parts by Kalhana (Kalhaṇa, 12th century), *Jonaraja* (Jonarāja, 15th century), *Shrivara* (Śrīvara, 15th century), *Prajyabhatta* (Prajyabhaṭṭa, 16th century) and *Shuka* (Śuka, 16th century) respectively. The first part of *Rajatarangini* presents the history of Kashmir right from the second millenium B.C. down to 1148 A.D; the second part *Rajavali* continues the description left by Kalhana upto 1412 A.D; the third part *Jainarajatarangini* upto 1477 A.D.; while the fourth part *Rajavalipitaka* upto the time of the conquest of Kashmir by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1586 A.D. The episodes presented below in translation have the flavour of legends, folk-tales or fairy tales with the overtone of a permanent humanitarian appeal; they also depict the religious and sociopolitical heritage of Kashmir.

i

The following extract is from the Prelude to Book I

What an indescribable thing is the merit of a good poet!

By means of it, his own fame as well as that of others is immortalized! Who but a poet can bring back the past in sweet composition, and what can make it intelligible if his art cannot? Although grace has been sacrificed in this work, for the sake of briefness, yet there are some things which will please the good. Happy is he, who is without worldliness and envy, and is favoured by the Goddess of Learning in narrating the past. I shall include past records in my writing, and the good will not turn away without knowing the usefulness of my work. Modern writers have tampered with the records of the eye-witnesses of past events, and it requires skill, therefore, to write a history of the past. To write the truth is my object.

• • •

Kashmira is studded with high cliffs, and cannot be conquered even by the strength of a good army; and the people are afraid of nothing but of the future world. In winter there are hot baths by the river, in summer the cool

river-banks; and the rivers are calm, and not infested with water animals. It is a country where the sun shines mildly, being the place created by Kashyapa as if for his glory. High school-houses, the saffron-iced water, and grapes, which are rare even in heaven, are common here. The Earth is the best place in the three worlds, the North the best place on the Earth; the Himalayas the best place in the North, Kailasa and the Kashmir Mandala the best place on the Himalayas.

Be it to the glory or shame of the country or the time, we will speak the truth, regarding the history of kings. This book contains accounts of many ancient manners; and what wise men will not feel charmed with it? The triumph of contentment will be apparent if the frail life of man be contemplated.

*ii*

The following episode from Book I narrates the story of King Jaloka and Krittidevi:

Ashoka's brave son Jaloka, said to have been the gift of Shiva whom he pleased by his worship, drove back the Mlechchhas from the country and succeeded in regaining his father's throne. An account of his accomplishments would astonish even the gods. If a golden egg were thrown into a tank, he could pierce it with his arrow. He knew the art of being under water, by which device he enjoyed the youthful daughters of the Nagas. He was the worshipper of Vijayeshvara, Nandisha and Kshetrajeshtesha—all, different representations of Shiva. His victory over these foreigners, which gained him great reputation, did not cease with their expulsion from his kingdom, but he pursued them to the sea. Weary of battles against them, he rested at a place where he tied up his hair, for which reason the place was named Ujjatadimba. He then turned his arms in another direction, conquered Konouje, and thence carried to his kingdom, some men of each of the four castes, who were versed in law and religion. Before his time, Kashmir was a poor country, and justice was not well administered.

• • •

It is narrated of this king that one day, when he was going to the temple of Vijayeshvara, he met a woman in the way who asked him for some food, and when he promised her whatever food she wanted, she changed herself into some deformed shape and asked for human flesh. Unwilling to kill anyone to satisfy her unnatural appetite, he permitted her to take off what she liked from his own body. This heroic self-devotion seemed to move her, and she remarked that for his tender regard for the life of others she considered

him a second Buddha. The king, being a follower of Shiva, did not know Buddha, and asked her who Buddha was, whom she took him to be. She then unfolded her mission and said, that on the other side of the hill of Lokaloka, where the sun never shone, there lived a tribe of Kirttika who were the followers of Buddha. This tribe, she continued with the eloquence of a missionary, were never angry even with those who did them injury, forgave them that trespassed against them, and even did them good. They taught truth and wisdom to all, and were willing to dispel the darkness of ignorance that covered the earth. "But this people", she added, "you have injured. There was a monastery belonging to us in which the beating of drums once disturbed your sleep, and incited by the advice of wicked men you have destroyed the monastery. The angry Buddhists sent me to murder you, but your high-priest interfered; he told me that you were a powerful monarch, against whom we would not be able to cope. He said that if you would listen to me, and build a monastery with your gold, you would atone for the sins of which you are guilty in destroying the former one. Here I came therefore and tested your heart in disguise". Krittidevi then returned to her people after extorting from the king a promise to build a monastery, and agreeably to his promise he caused it to be erected on the very place of their meeting.

### *iii*

The following episode, "King Nara and a damsel", is also from Book I.

In the kingdom of Nara I, son of Vibhishana II, dwelt a Brahmana whose wife, the daughter of a Naga, was possessed of exceeding beauty, in so much that the king heard of her beauty through spies, and became enamoured of her. Not even the fear of discredit could check his wayward heart. Then, again, an accident fanned his passion beyond control. One day while the girl was sitting on the terrace of her house, she saw a horse eating the grain which was left drying outside her house. She called her servants to drive away the animal, but none of them being there, she descended herself, and holding with one hand her veil which was slipping away owing to the haste she made, she drove the horse by pushing the animal with the other. Her palm and fingers left a golden impress on the animal. This the king heard, and, enamoured as he was of her, became more violent. He first employed persons to seduce her, who tormented her with temptation, but to no effect. On this the shameless king, blind in his passion, asked for her of her own husband. This failed also, and he received only abusive language in return, from the offended husband. At last he sent some soldiers to snatch away the girl. While the soldiers were attacking the house on the front, the

Brahmana with his wife made their exit by another way, and came to the Naga for help. There he related the insult which the king had intended to offer to his daughter. The Naga became enraged, and in his vengeance burnt down the city; thousands who fled to Chakrachara for shelter were also burnt, and the Vitasta ran polluted with scorched human remains. The king perished in the conflagration.

\* \* \*

When a king, under the pretence of protecting his subjects, oppresses them, he generally meets such a death unawares. For it is known that the anger either of a chaste woman, or of a Brahmana or of a god can destroy the three worlds.

This king reigned over a period of thirty-nine years and nine months, and within this short time the town of Kinnarapura became as beautiful as Gandharvapura.

It was by mere chance that Nara's son prince Sidha was absent at Vijayakshetra when the catastrophe happened to the king and his capital, and thus his life was saved from the general ruin. He set himself to repairing the ravages done in the last reign. He was of a religious character and led a pure life, and passed his days in peace. The misfortune of his father was an instruction.

*iv*

This passage from Book II tells the story of King Tunjina.

In the reign of Tunjina lived Chandraka, a partial incarnation of Vyasa the great poet. He invented a sort of dance. A severe calamity visited the kingdom in this reign, as if to test the noble hearts of the sovereigns. In the season of autumn, in the month of Bhadra, a sudden and heavy frost blighted the sali grain that was then ripening, and the consequence was a severe famine which threatened the destruction of the people. Natural feelings were smothered, nor shame nor pride nor nobility was then remembered. Everyone became mad with hunger, nor cared for his wife or son or father, but devoured what he could get, unmindful of the solicitations of his wife or child, son or father, weak and famished with hunger. Men were reduced to bare skeletons, disgusting to the sight; they abused and fought with one another for food, and oppressed with hunger they cast their eyes in every direction eager to satisfy their appetite by destroying every living thing. At this time of distress, the king and the queen showed the greatest humanity; they invited the people to their palace and fed them; they imported rice from other countries, defraying the expenses from their own treasury, as

well as from those of their ministers; and fed the people day and night. Everyone was taken care of whether residing in houses, or wandering in woods or streets or in the burning ghat. One night when the king found that his treasures were spent, and there was no rice, he was much grieved and said to his queen: "Surely O queen! for some sins of ours this great calamity has befallen our people. Woe is me before whose eyes these people are dying of hunger; and since I cannot save these our helpless subjects, what is the use of my living? In consequence of much anxious care and attention there has been no mortality as yet. But now that the earth is reduced to poverty and deprived of all glory, no means are left to deliver the people from this great calamity. It seems that the end of the world is nigh; the mountain passes are blocked up with snow, and there is no way left for people to go out of the country; and they are doomed to die here. See how the men, the heroic, the wise and the learned, have been reduced. How in our days of prosperity, splendour smiled on every side, and now it is gone. Let me perish in the flames since I see no means to relieve my subjects, and I am unable to see them die. Happy are those kings who seeing their subjects as their sons, at ease, can pass their nights in peace". Thus saying, the tender-hearted king fell on his bed, and covering his face with cloth began to weep profusely. There was no wind, and the lamp burnt steadily with a long flame. The queen saw him in that condition and thus consoled him: "How the misfortune of your subjects has turned your sense that you lose your patience and behave like vulgar men! If the evil be inevitable, no one can avert it. But failure reflects no discredit on the great. Women should love their husbands, ministers should remain faithful, and the king should protect his subjects without deviating his attention to any other affair. Arise O king! my words are never spoken in vain, your subjects' distress is over". When the queen had finished her noble speech, dead pigeons dropped in every house and the people lived on them. The king saw this and relinquished his intention of committing suicide. But loathed to destroy animal life the queen contrived to prevent the supply of these birds. In the meantime the sky cleared up and the famine disappeared. The queen gave the villages of Katimusha and Ramusha to Brahmanas. The king died after a reign of thirty-six years, and his queen, unable to bear the affliction, perished by burning herself.

v

The extract below concerning King Sandhimati is from Book II.

Sandhimati, otherwise called Aryyaraja, found his kingdom weakened by internal disagreement, but took no steps to mend matters. On the contrary, he was anxious to resign his office, believing that his tutelary god had given



him a fitting opportunity to relieve himself of his kingdom, and to engage himself in devotion. He thought himself happy that in the midst of the enjoyments of the kingdom, he did not forget his various duties which were yet to be performed; and he was glad that he would resign the kingdom of his own free will, and was not compelled to do it by force; and that during the long period of his reign there had been no misrule. "Fortunately" he said "I am not grieved to resign my office, nor blame my fortune for it". Thus resolved, and making his mind a kingdom in itself, he one day assembled his subjects and resigned the kingdom into their hands after a reign of forty-seven years, as if he returned to them what was entrusted to him for safe keeping. Many people tried to induce him to retain his office, but in vain. Having once resigned it, he refused to accept the kingdom again. Dressed as a hermit, and, clad in white cloth and without a turban, he went on foot towards the north like a devotee, speaking to none, and fixing his eyes on his feet. Many of his late subjects followed him weeping silently. After he had proceeded more than four miles, he sat down under a tree, and having consoled his weeping followers, he sent them back. In this way he proceeded, loitering at the foot of the hills, and as he went on further his subjects gradually left him. With a few attendants he began to ascend the mountains. At last taking leave of his last weeping followers, he entered the woods, where many a hermit slept in his cavern home. There in the evening he built a cottage beside a tank, and within it made a bed of leaves, keeping his water in a pot made of the same material. The moon shone on the top of the hills, the new grass variegated the colour at the base of the mountains; there beneath the Mallika tree slept the milk women; and there was heard the music of the fountains mingled with that of the goat-herds' lute—all these lulled the weary king to rest. The howl of the wild beasts, and the cry of karkaretu told him that the night was past. Rising from his sleep, he performed his morning devotions and repaired to the celebrated shrine of Sodara. There in Nandikshetra he stood before the image of Mahadeva besmeared with ashes, his locks of hair tied, his hand holding a garland of seeds, while the old rishis looked on him with surprise. He spent his days in devotions and begging alms.

*vi*

This story of King Durlabhavardhana is from Book III.

Now this king Baladitya had a daughter named Anangalekha; an astrologer seeing her one day with her father prophesied to the king that his son-in-law would reign hereafter, and that the line of Gonanda would end in Baladitya. The king, not wishing that the kingdom would pass away from his line through his daughter, tried to oppose fate; and instead of marrying her to a king he

married her to a beautiful man named Durlabhavardhana, of the Ashvaghama Kayastha caste, thinking that as his daughter was not married to one of the royal family she would not be able to inherit the kingdom. This Durlabhavardhana was the illegitimate son of Naga Karkota, begotten for getting the kingdom, but the king was not aware of the fact. What the wise neglect, Fate makes it great. He fortunately became beloved of all on account of his just actions and good intellect, and his father-in-law named him Prajnaditya because of his great intellect, and bestowed much riches on him.

On the other hand the princess being the favourite of her parents, and filled with youthful pride, slighted her husband. Her association with the dissolute, her luxurious habits, the frequent visitation by young men, her abode in her father's house, and the mildness of her husband; – all these corrupted her. Having frequent opportunities of seeing the minister Kharga she fell in love with him, and abandoned herself to him. This amour secretly gratified gradually wore off her shame, fear, and dignity, and she gradually became exceedingly shameless. The minister bribed the servants with gifts and honours, and had free access to her apartments, and gratified his passion for the princess to the fulness of his heart. Her husband, by her constant neglect of him, came at last to suspect of her bad character. The thoughts of his wife's misconduct reduced him in body. One night he suddenly entered her apartment in order to ascertain the truth. He found her fast asleep in the embrace of her paramour, her bosoms heaving with long breathings. He burnt with anger at seeing her in this state of unpardonable guilt – a sight that would have enraged even others than husband. And swayed alternately by anger and grief, he with great difficulty, and after much deliberation, controlled his anger. The woman whose passion gets the better of her sense is very pleasant among her female companions in private; looks into the streets; dislikes the sight of her husband and of men like him; slights the anger of her husband; and attends when her husband is ill spoken of; speaks with her female companions when her husband wants her; and praises those who are against him; and turns away from his kisses and cannot bear his embraces, nor feel any pleasure in them; and pretend to sleep when in bed with her husband. They are miserable, thought Durlabhavardhana, who follow love, for men of little wit are undone by it. Who has better control over his passion than he who has duly subdued jealousy which is like spasmodic cholera. "The woman" he continued "is for the gratification of passion, and like other things, can be enjoyed in common; wherefore then a man whose feelings are disciplined, be angry on such account? Women are naturally fickle, and who can keep them under rules? Or what is the use of keeping them so? If the meeting of two persons to gratify a passion is an honourable act, what then is dishonourable? And since one's own body cannot be proved to be his, how can a woman be called "mine?" If she deserves death because

she gives me pain, why do I not first kill love which is the prime root of all? And to destroy love, I must destroy jealousy first. For he who has destroyed jealousy has totally destroyed affection within half a minute". Thus he thought, and wrote on Kharga's cloth the following words, "Though you ought to have been killed, yet have I spared you; this you should remember". When Durlabhavardhana had gone out of the room unperceived, the minister awoke, and read the writings in his cloth. This moderation of Durlabhavardhana won the minister to his side. He forgot his lust and the princess, and meditated how to repay the goodness by which his life was saved, in so much that he did not sleep well being buried in thoughts as how to repay the goodness of the injured husband.

Now after a reign of thirty-seven years and four months Baladitya died, and with him the Gonanda dynasty became extinct. And while the chief ministers neglected the affairs of the kingdom, the grateful Kharga duly crowned the late king's son-in-law, bathing him with the waters collected from holy places and pured from a golden vessel; and the kingdom thus passed from the Gonanda dynasty to that of Karkota Naga as passed the Ganga from heaven to the head of Shiva.

### *vii*

The following episode about King Jayapida and Kamala is from Book IV:

The king Jayapida knew dancing, and naturally enough wished to see a dance, and entered the temple of Karttikeya. For a time he sat on a stone at the door of the temple. He had an air of majesty in him which the people perceived and wondered, and they moved aside from him. It so happened that the dancing girl Kamala saw with wonder the beautiful king, and his uncommon mein. She also marked that he frequently touched his shoulders and concluded that he must be some great man travelling over the world in disguise. "Maybe", she thought, "he is a king or a king's son or born of some high family who is accustomed to take betel from behind him, since he is frequently touching his back. The elephant shakes his ears though there be no blackbees, the lion looks behind as he goes though there be no elephant near, the peacock dances though the clouds be dispersed; thus habit makes one work though there be no cause for so working". Thus thinking she made a sign to a bosom-friend of hers, bidding her to approach the king; and when he placed his hand on his back as before, Kamala's friend placed a betel there, which the king took, and putting it to his mouth looked and saw her. He asked her by a movement of his eyebrows who she was. She replied his question. He was pleased with her sweet conversation; and when the dance was over, she accompanied him to Kamala's house. The king was struck with Kamala's courteous behaviour, her tenderness and beauty. Now when the moon had risen, she took her guest by the hand, and led him

to her bedroom. There lying on a golden couch, the girl, drunk with Mairaya wine, practised her arts on the king, but he did not touch her. And when she became ashamed of her forwardness, the king clasped her to his bosom, and gently said: "It is not, O! beauteous-eyed, that you have not touched my heart, but owing to my present misfortunes. I am obliged to offend you by not responding to your caresses. I am your servant, your simplicity has sought me, and you will soon know my history, and then excuse me. Know that I have vowed not to enjoy pleasures till I have done my task". So saying he played a tune with his fingers on the couch, and sighed and recited a verse: "Whose lust of conquest is not satisfied, can he think of woman? The sun does not come to his spouse in the evening without conquering the whole world". When he had finished the recitation, the girl took him to be some great man. On the morning when the king was about to depart, Kamala requested him not to go, and gave him a lodging in her house.

Once the king went out to a riverside to perform his evening prayer, and it was late when he returned, and found the whole household extremely anxious on his account. When he asked the cause of their anxiety, Kamala smiled and said:- "At night there comes a great lion which kills many lives; day by day it destroys man, elephant, horse, and you being late we were apprehensive of your safety. Be he king or prince, no one stirs from his house at night". The king smiled at her tale. That night passed, the king went out of the city next evening, and waited beneath a large banyan tree for the lion. From a distance he spied the animal looking like the very smile of Yama moving about. He shouted in order to draw the attention of the beast, and at that deafening noise, the lion yelled and approached, his mane shaking, his eyes burning, and his ears erected. The active king thrust his hand up to the elbow into the mouth of the lion, and cut inside his chest. The lion vomited blood and died of that single stroke. The king washing his blood, and hiding the wound on his elbow, slept as before in the house of Kamala. In the morning King Jayanta heard that the lion had been killed, and urged by curiosity, went out to see it. There he beheld the huge carcase of the animal killed by one single person, and felt sure that he who had destroyed it was more than man. He was, however, surprised when a follower of his gave him a Keyura, [an ornament worn on the upper arm] taken out from the mouth of the lion, marked with the name of Shri Jayapida. How came he here? Asked the king, and the city became alarmed at the information.

. . .

The citizens, trusting in the word of their truthful king, made search after Jayapida, and at last informed Jayanta that the king of Kashmir was stopping

in the house of Kamala. The king with his ministers and his ladies came to the place, and with due attention conveyed him to his palace. And then he married him to Kalyanadevi. Jayapida then subdued the five kings of Gaura, and made his father-in-law paramount over them. The army which he had left behind under the command of Devashamma, the son of Mittrashamma, the minister of his grandfather, joined him and at the request of his general he returned to his country with his wife and Kamala.

*viii*

This extract from Book VI tells the story of King Chakravarmma.

Chakravarmma, having got the kingdom and destroyed all his enemies, became vain and cruel. He loved flattery and those who flattered him. Soothed by flattery, and considering himself a god, he did many foolish acts. At this time a foreigner named Ranga who was a good singer, and of Domva caste, came to his court. He was made to wait outside, while the guards seated the ministers and petty chiefs according to their ranks, a space being left in the front of the king. The court was crowded with white turbans, and illumined with lamps, and cool night breeze blew. The ladies of the zenana wishing to hear the song, peeped through windows, their lips smelling of Asava wine. The Domva followed by his train then entered the court. He had two beautiful daughters Hansi and Nagalata, on whom all gazed with eagerness, and they too cast their glances of love on all sides as if for the second time they scattered flowers in the court. The court rang with the song of the singers singing the praise of the king and "Long live the king", "Victory to the king", etc. The two girls tuned the flute to the tune of Panchama, and sang without moving the head or the eye; and it appeared as if only one person was singing. The king gazed on them without moving and steadfastly. The girls marked the king's emotion; and sang more charmingly. They and the king interchanged their thoughts by their glances. One of the courtiers marked the king's feelings and thus encouraged his passion. "As the Maireya wine, O king, is perfumed by camphor, so is the song, by the lips of these two girls. The moon kisses their white teeth as they sing; they by their motions, songs and glances charm even the gods. One of them, knowing that we are speaking of them, is smiling and looking at us; the other is singing with down-cast face, her ear-rings waving, while she makes voluptuous gestures. Happy is the youth for whose absence such women sing in loneliness. How can, according to the dictates of Shastras alone, everything be accepted, and one thing only be discarded. It is no sin to see beauty, to hear song, but how can it be sin to touch her". The passion of the naturally restless king, thus encouraged by the words of the courtier, became violent. Courtiers often lead kings to evil path, even as lions are

misled by clouds. If sophist courtiers could not beguile fools, who would have wandered in hell? The king, who was as liberal as Radheya (Karna) but on unworthy objects, pleased the Domvas with the presents of Hara, Keyura and Kundala (ornaments) and went to the inner apartments. Fie to them who spend their wealth on simple songs mistaking them for poetry. The beauty of harlots, of the rainbow, and of the ordinary song abideth not long. The king could not rest satisfied without those two girls. They too, while they were singing, embraced the king, at which he felt ashamed. The perspiration caused by his passion made the king's body cool, and it seemed as if the warmth of his good fortune left him.

Hansi was made his principal queen. Those who ate the remnants after her meal became good courtiers. The ministers who served the Domva were promoted to the posts of judges in the courts of justice. Some of the Domvas, on account of their ignorance, were not created ministers; others who knew of politics managed the kingdom. The newly-created ministers were thieves. The queen and the favourites were of low caste (literally—those who cooked dog's flesh). Everything was unusual in the kingdom... Some determined to oppose the king, and did not take the food tasted by these low-caste people, and they were considered as of high caste like those who drink the Soma juice. Surely no powerful gods existed in the country, for then low-caste people could not have entered the temples. On the Tiladvadashi day the principal queen visited Ranasvami followed by the proud people of her caste. The orders of these people, because of their connection with the king, were obeyed as the king's. The king bestowed the village of Helu to Ranga, but the Patta (clerk) did not write out the gift. Ranga entered the court of justice and angrily asked the clerk, calling him the son of a female servant, why he did not write out the gift. Terrified at the anger of Ranga, the clerk wrote out the gift at last. What law is not upset when the king is bad?

The king asked what expiation would palliate his connection with the low-caste women, and his gay companions made him perform some ludicrous acts. His courtiers advised him that cold is destroyed by cold, and crimes by crimes. In order to palliate his connection with low-caste women, he corrupted the wife of a Brahmana who had been fasting for a month for some religious purpose. Some Brahmanas were still more vicious than the king; they ate in the king's house, and received gifts of villages from him.

The king erected Chakramatha for the Shaivas, but he died when it was half finished, and his queen completed it after his death which happened in the following manner. The ungrateful king, who loved the low-caste women, forgot past benefits and privately killed many innocent and faithful Damaras. Some of the Damara thieves therefore were seeking an opportunity and pretence to assassinate him. One night they found the king unarmed in the

privy near the room of his principal queen. Having got this opportunity they quickly hurled on him numerous sharp weapons from all sides. He was dosing, but was quite awakened by the fall of the weapons, like a man sleeping by a lake and suddenly thrown into it, and he began to bawl aloud. He searched for his weapon but in the meantime he was severely cut. He fled to his bed-room, followed by his pursuers. The queen embraced him weeping, but his enemies killed him in her embrace. Instigated by the other queens, the murderers smashed the knees of the dying king with a stone. On the 8th day of the bright moon in the month of Jaishta of the year 13, the king was killed like a dog by villains.

Sharvata and other ministers then raised Unmattavanti, son of the wicked Partha, to the throne. This king was worse than his predecessor. Sarasvati stops here in fear of contamination by narrating the sinful acts of this king, but I shall lead her as one leads a frightened mare. This monster was the destroyer of his father's line.

### *ix*

The following extract from Book VI gives an account of the justice of King Yashaskara:

One day a Brahmana who used to perform the rites of Prayopaveshana came to the King Yashaskara and said that he was an inhabitant of Kashmir, that he had been rich before, but through misfortune had been reduced to poverty. His debts had increased and he was harassed by his creditors, so that he had sold his house to a rich merchant and paid up his debts by selling everything and had gone out to travel in different countries. But considering, said he, "that my wife should be supported, I retained possession of a well with a staircase (part of the house) that she may live by letting the place on hire to those who in summer may like to keep betels and flowers there. After wandering for twenty years in different places, and having acquired some little wealth I have again returned to my country. I found my wife deprived of her beauty, and getting her livelihood by serving as a female servant to someone. I asked her why she had undertaken service, since I had left her the means of livelihood. She replied that when I was gone the merchant had driven her out of the well and staircase by beating her with a stick. 'What other means is left to me', she said and stopped, and I was sunk in grief and anger on hearing the account. But the judges are in every step deciding in favour of the defendant. I do not understand justice, I have not sold that place, and am determined to have it or die. I, who am a poor man, shall die at your door; and if you fear sin, judge rightly. The king then sat on his seat of justice, and called in all the judges and began to investigate the matter. The judges said that they had several times adjudged the Brahmana's

case, but that he had lost his suit, that he ought to be punished, and that he did not admit the justice of the decision because of his cunningness. The king saw the sale-deed, and found that the well with the staircase had been sold along with the house. But the king thought that the plaintiff was in the right. After thinking for a moment, he began to amuse the courtiers with his conversation; and in the midst of the talk, he from time to time took jewels from several persons as if to examine them; and in the same way he took a ring from the defendant to look at it. Asking them all to wait for a moment, he on pretence of washing his feet withdrew from the room, and sent one of his servants with the ring and proper instructions to the house of that very merchant. The king's servant went to the account-keeper of the trader and asked him for the accounts from the year in which the sale of the house was effected. The account-keeper thought that the merchant might have some necessity for the accounts, gave them over to him, taking from him the ring. Among the items of expenditure, the king saw that a sum of a thousand dinnaras had been paid to the court writer, and knowing that the fee of writing document was small, wondered as to why the merchant should have paid so large a sum. He at last came to the conclusion that ॠ had there been changed to ॡ\* The king showed the accounts to the courtiers, and caused the court writer to be brought; and having assured him of his safety, he proved the fraud to the court. The courtiers admired the king, and the king gave to the plaintiff, the house and wealth of the merchant whom he exiled out of his country.

Once upon a time when he had said his evening prayer, and was going to take his meal, a door-keeper, afraid to report thus untimely, said that a Brahmana had now brought a complaint; that he had told the Brahmana that the court time was over, and he should lay his complaint the next day, but that the Brahmana threatened to kill himself unless he was granted an audience that day. Without taking his meal, the king ordered him to be brought in. The poor Brahmana, when questioned, said that after travelling in various countries, and acquiring one hundred gold Rupakas he had returned to Kashmir, his native land, as he had heard that it was then well-governed. "Owing to your administration" he said "there is no thief in the way; and last night being weary of travel I stopped at Lavanotsa and slept beneath a road-side tree in a garden apprehending nothing. When I rose in the morning, my bundle containing my little property fell into a well which I had not seen before. Bereft of wealth and sunk in grief I was throwing myself into the well, but

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In the sale-deed of the house it originally stood thus "सोपानकुपरहित", i.e. the house was sold "without the staircase and the well", but changing ॠ into ॡ which is not at all a difficult performance it became "सोपानकुपसहित", i.e. "together with the staircase and the well".



the people prevented me. One brave and determined man asked me as to what I could offer him if he could get out the money. 'That money is yours, and whatever you wish, you can give me out of it', I said in despair. He descended and brought it up, and gave me two pieces, and took ninety-eight himself. The case now depended on the verbal contract made and the people blamed me for making the contract; the laws being strict on the point. Your laws are bad and so I shall die at your door". The king enquired as to the contract made and the name of the man, but he replied that he could only describe his face. The king then said that he would do what the Brahmana desired, the next morning, and dined with him that evening. When the merchants of Lavanotsa sent for by the king arrived, one of them was pointed out by the complainant as the offending person. When questioned, that man corroborated what the Brahmana had said before, but pointed to the existing law and the agreement made. The Brahmana had engaged himself by his promise, and the people waited to see the result of the case. The king then sat on the seat of justice and ordered ninety-eight pieces to be given to the Brahmana and two to the other person. He explained that instead of saying, 'give what you will', the Brahmana said "whatever you wish, you may give". Now this avaricious person wished for ninety-eight pieces but gave the Brahmana only two pieces, which he did not wish for. Thus the king adjudged cases.

X

The following is from the episode of King Kshemagupta from Book VI:

King Kshemagupta was a great drunkard and naturally wicked, and was rendered still more so by his evil associates, even as clouds shed a deeper darkness over a moonless night. Phalguna and other wicked courtiers, who served him, dressed themselves as richly as the king. Though the king was addicted to wine, women and dice, and his courtiers stole enormously, yet his wealth was not exhausted; and it is strange that the king still remained so rich. It is not strange that Shri (wealth) should even for a day love the lotus, whose friend is the affectionate black-bee who loves honey and sucks it from the bud? Vamana and other courtiers of the family of Jishnu tempted him like the devil. The king became a scoffer of others, addicted to other people's wives, and covetous of other people's wealth. He plucked the beards of those who waited on him, spat at them, abused them and struck their heads with his fists. Women became his favourites by yielding their persons, the hunters by knocking about in the woods, and his courtiers by their indecent speech. The court was filled with the prostitutes, the cunning, the foolish and the rebels; and was unfit for the wise to approach. The king was made to dance by the sons of Jishnu, like an idol in a machine; and they called him scatterer of *kankana* and so induced to scatter away to them

that kind of ornaments. They attributed faults to the innocent, showed new things to the king, insulted noble persons by striking their heads with fists, and thereby received favours from the king. They exposed the rounded breasts of their wives and thereby induced the passionate king to their houses, and there got out money from him by dice. In expectation of money, the shameless courtiers brought their wives to the king, and afterwards asked him whose wife had given him the greatest pleasure. Among the courtiers, Hari and Dhurjati were prevented by their mother from bringing their wives to the king, and so they became beggars. Thus the courtiers made their wives unchaste, and themselves objects of ridicule. They sacrificed their long-standing friendship with others, and sometimes they even lost their wealth. What was it then that they so eagerly pursued at such sacrifices?

From *Rajatarangini*, 12th century

Tr. by Jogesh Chunder Dutt

## Pandu's Hunt

ANANTAKAVI

CHAMPUBHARATAM (Campūbhāratam, 12th century) by Anantakavi presents the whole of Mahabharata in *champu* form, a mixture of prose and verse.

The following passage describes the hunting sport of King Pandu, the father of the five Pandavas.

With his heart allured by hunting, King Pandu once rode on a horse, white like the moon and capable of defeating the wind in a race. He was accompanied by several warriors with snares and other equipments who in turn were followed by the hunting dogs. His two wives, Kunti and Madri, the daughters of Kings Yadu and Madra respectively, sweet in nature and humble in temperament, came along.

King Pandu entered the thick forest in the valley of the Himalayas; the pinnacles of whose lofty mountains seemed to be rising higher and higher due to the *siddhas* residing there.

With his hair plaited with the garland of the buds of *mallika*, and daggers tied to the belt on his waist, the quiver decorating one of his shoulders and the great bow which always conquered the enemies in one of his hands, the king of kings started killing the wild animals one by one.

Filled with the fragrance of the lotuses blooming in the Manasarovara, the wind blew slowly. It dried the drops of perspiration that incessantly appeared on the forehead of Pandu.

Amidst all that wilderness, filled with the cooing of birds and sheltering wild animals, the king spotted a special kind of deer called *chamaru* and

started chasing it. The warriors accompanying him lagged behind. The king was carried away by the attraction for the spotted skin of the deer. Through the clouds of dust arising from the hoofs of his horse, the deer could sense the danger fast approaching him. At this juncture, the king noticed a pair of deer in the hollow of shrubs and creepers. They looked very young and were lying closeted in the embrace enjoying the bliss of copulation.

With a swift and sharp arrow  
the king shot at the male of the pair;  
and lo! all of a sudden  
it was transformed into a sage.

He was, in fact, a sage named Kindama. Angry at the cessation of his happy intercourse and the blood oozing from his body, and burning with rage like the sun at the time of the great flood, he immediately uttered a curse that prevented Pandu from intercourse with any beautiful lady; any attempt for it would result in his own death.

From *Champancharitam*, 12th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## Devotional Songs to Lord Shiva

### UTPALADEVA

UTPALADEVA (12th century) the author of *Shivastotravali* (Śivastotrāvali) was the teacher of Abhinavagupta. He was a great thinker and one of the founders of the *pratyabhijnā* school.

Given below are stanzas 1-26 from the First Hymn.

1

We all bow down before that devotee, who, without following usual means of meditation or counting of beads, effortlessly attains the Light of Lord Shiva.

2

My soul is ever youthful by virtue of the nectar of your devotion. Yet it looks old due to grey hair on account of the dust gathered during the pilgrimage of life.

3

The devotees, who have acquired the wealth of Your realization and who

dwelt in Your abode, are governed by the extension of the same experience during the course of their worldly activities.

4

O Lord, when this whole world is a manifestation of Yourself, where can one find a place which is not sacred to the devotees, or where their mantra will not bear fruit?

5

O Lord, hail to the devotees who have drunk the heavenly wine of supreme devotion. They worship You as the One-without-a-second, even though they always have You as the Second.

6

O Lord, the persons so steeped in the joy of intense devotion alone are able to realize the essence of Your limitless ocean of bliss.

7

You are the Self of all beings and O Lord, everybody loves his self. One who is conversant with this automatic course of devotion is the real Victor.

8

O Lord, when the objective world is obliterated and You stand all alone, anybody can recognize You. But Your devotees are able to see You clearly even through the interplay of the subject and the object.

9

May my devotion for You be as inseparable from me as Your Divine Consort, a lake of limitless joy, is from You!

10

O Lord, for your devotees this whole worldly experience of pleasure, pain and delusion is but a means to Your realization.

11

O Master, as compared to the experience of partaking of the celestial

wine of Your devotion, even the most exalted state of intellectual knowledge appears like sour wine to me.

## 12

Only those, who have mastered the great science of Your devotion, know the reality of Knowledge and Ignorance.

## 13

This creeper of speech is growing steadily from the root; also it is nourished with the divine nectar of Your devotion. May it be laden with luscious fruits (of ecstatic love) for me!

## 14

Some say, "Worship after becoming Shiva Himself." While others decree, "Worship after becoming a devotee." (Both these injunctions are the same because) Your devotees have discovered through their non-dualistic experiments that You are The Ultimate Truth personified .

## 15

Where there is no dearth of logical arguments for devotees to establish Your Oneness; there is no dearth of counter-arguments for the vile detractors to refute the same, either.

## 16

O Lord, the doctrine—that through yoga You can be attained at a particular place or time—is totally misleading. Otherwise, how is it possible that You appear vividly to the devotees here, there and everywhere all the time?

## 17

The great difference between the devotees and the yogins is that though the former do not practise *pratyahara*<sup>1</sup> etc., they retain their equanimity even during *vyutthana*<sup>2</sup>.

## 18

Neither yoga, nor penances, nor any other special system of worship is

1. Yogic withdrawal of sense organs, mind, ego and intellect in the reverse order.
2. Return to normal psychic state from *samadhi*.

commendable. In this course of Shiva-realization free from artificial formalities, devotion alone is to be commended.

19

My ignorance has been dispelled by the all-pervading glow of devotion. Now that I am able to perceive the true nature of all beings, kindly put off all my mental bewilderments.

20

Oh, among Your devotees he indeed is a blessed one who always has the name of Shiva on the tip of his tongue and thus experiences the joy of all sense-objects put together.

21

(Devotees are) seated comfortably in the unruffled, cool, crystal clear, and sweet ocean of the nectar of devotion and contented with the partaking of transcendental bliss. Whom else do such people count?

22

O Lord, why should not the people like me chew the most efficacious herb of Your devotion, which contains an endless *rasa* named Salvation?

23

Good men only crave for such fortunes which are conducive to the enjoyment of the bliss of Your devotion.

24

The indescribable showers of the nectar of Your devotion are experienced by those alone, who though fallen into this mire of attachment, etc., are not themselves affected thereby.

25

The fruits of the *siddhis*<sup>1</sup> starting with *anima*<sup>2</sup> and culminating in moksha (salvation) are similar to the fruits of the fully-grown creeper of Your devotion.

1. Eight spiritual accomplishments.
2. The atomic state of the gross bodily form.

O Lord, it is really strange that this mind, which by nature is the seed of all sufferings, is able to produce the sublime fruits of salvation when it is nourished with the fluid (*rasa*) of Your devotion.

From *Shivastotravali*, 12th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Seven Hundred Arya Verses

### GOVARDHANA

GOVARDHANA (12th century), son of Nilambara Somayajin, is the author of *Aryasaptashati* (*Āryāsaptasāti*) which is an anthology of seven hundred verses in Arya metre.

May the eyes of the white-lotus-eyed Vishnu—  
The lotus emerging from his navel to look at her pudendum  
And so covered by the bashful Lashmi—  
May those eyes be for your well-being! (10)

•

Your false statement to shield your guilt  
Pains me more than your guilt itself.  
An injury by a weapon is not so painful  
As the piercing of a needle. (11)

•

O confidante! a wealthy man soon destroys the quality  
But a poor man retains it.  
A full pitcher drowns the rope,  
Whereas an empty one does not. (94)

•

O black bee! you scratch in vain  
The sandy pollen beach of the *ketaki* flower.  
It looks beautiful,  
cut no river of honey flows underneath it. (227)

•

A good man does not give up his nature  
Though he lives in the company of the wicked.

Though dwelling with the sun on every new moon night,  
The moon, when he comes out, is cool.

(279)

•

She, who on the first night, had to be persuaded  
By her friends to enter the bridal chamber,  
Does not seem to hear the signal  
To come out of it the next morning.

(385)

•

O black bee! drink from the *bakula* bud,  
Only from afar with the tip of your tongue.  
The honey therein will vanish at the touch of your lip;  
Keep your mouth off, O lover!

(397)

•

Although the sandal tree was made by the Creator  
Bereft of flower and fruit,  
It removes the affliction of others  
With its own body.

(489)

•

Fortune begets equalities in a man,  
Whereas poverty removes them.  
The full moon is round and beautiful,  
But on the wane he looks crooked.

(505)

•

The cluster of drops of perspiration  
On the fresh nail marks on your breast  
Looks like a mass of pearls,  
Strung together on a silken thread.

(589)

•

Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, like a courtesan,  
Gives ample pleasure, but nothing retains.  
But Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, the noble dame,  
Abandons not her devotee for life after life.

(678)



## The Story of Nala

SHRIHARSHA

SHRIHARSHA (Śrīharṣa 12th century) was a court poet of King Vijayachandra of Kanauj. He was a versatile genius, an eminent philosopher well-versed in Nyaya and Vedanta and an outstanding poet of the ornate style. While his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍākhādyā* is an invincible fort for the fundamental concept of Advaita Vedanta, his poetic masterpiece, *Naiṣadhīyacaritam*, is a panacea for promotion of scholarship (*naiṣadham vidvadauśadham*).

A few representative specimens of the *Naiṣadhīyacaritam* dealing with the love story of Nala and Damayanti are reproduced below :

### i

The following passage from Section I, verses 13-17 is a eulogy of King Nala.

Just as hostile kings gave up creating disaffection among his subjects for fear of him, similarly did even mutually conflicting attributes give up their contrast out of fear for him? For by virtue of his power he was both conqueror of enemies and conqueror of friends; he saw through spies, and at the same time did not see through spies. (13)

The Creator draws, round the sun and the moon, a halo for a cancelling mark, whenever he thinks, "These two are useless in the presence of Nala's might and fame. (14)

"This man will be poor" – this script of the Creator present on the forehead of suppliants was not made false by the king having surpassed the Wishing Tree (in generosity), he made poverty itself poor. (15)

Two things were regarded by him as his two blemishes, resting on his head in the shape of his divided hair; namely, that he did not by partitioning the (golden) Mountain of Meru, put it at the disposal of suppliants, and that he did not turn the ocean into a desert, by giving away "waters of gift". (16)

The able king, with a splendour like that of the sun, rose in prosperity day by day, joyfully passing his time with poets and scholars, who ceaselessly practised their art; just as the powerful sun rises each day in joy, creating the hours with the planets Venus and Mercury constantly staying by its side. (17)

### ii

The following passage from Section I, verses 133-135 and 142 and 144 presents King Nala and the Swan:

"Why is the earth to-day not ashamed of thee, her lord, oppressing as thou dost even one like me, who thus makes a living like an ascetic with lotus fruit and roots?" (133)

Making the king amazed, ashamed and compassionate with words like these, the bird caused some utterances, rivers of pathos, to be guests in Nala's heart, an ocean of kindness. (134)

"I am the only son of my aged mother, my poor wife has new-born children, and I am their only support; thou Fate who persecutest me, it is strange that pity holdeth thee not in check". (135)

"Children, calling whom with your cooings for a long while, shaking your mouths at whom, will you learn to speak?" Having fainted with these words, the bird regained consciousness, being drenched with the king's flowing tears. (142)

While its friends were honouring it, as if with a waving of lights in the guise of their circular flying round it, the bird made tears of joy follow in the wake of their streams of tears, previously shed in grief. (144)

### *iii*

The following is verse 72 of Section IV.

"For the use of the god of death, the moon was carefully made with all its digits serving as teeth, as a device for crushing maidens separated from their lovers: it is why the moon is known as Dvijaraja.<sup>1</sup> (72)

### *iv*

The glory of Bharata Varsha is described in verses 97 and 98 of Section VI.

"I am desirous of attaining that religious virtue, blended with waves of bliss, by serving my husband here in this Bharata, which the greatest among the good extoll among lands, just as they do the family stage among the stages of life. (97)

"Those who live in heaven have happiness, but no duties, while here in this land (of Bharata) exist both the former and the latter; the gods, too, can be pleased here by the performance of sacrifices; how can I thus wish for one, rejecting three? (98)

1. The word Dvijaraja, an epithet of the moon, meaning "the king of the Brahmanas" may be construed also as meaning "the king of teeth".

## v

The following verses 15-21 from Section VII describe the beauty of Damayanti :

"Verily the women created in former times served only as sketching practice for the Creator's hand in order to create her, while the creation of present and future women is meant to procure her the fame of surpassing them in beauty. (15)

"Beautiful objects of nature danced in proportion to their inferiority to her limbs; for (in spite of that), the poet was sure to bring them prestige by comparing them to those superior limbs. (16)

"She was not touched, I ween, by any defect, fearing she would, when seen, charm it into unconsciousness (by her beauty); so in others merits are marred by defects, but in her they abide happy without any rivals. (17)

"The limbs of my beloved shunned the rough beauty of the seed-pod of the lotus, not because of its watery ~~fort~~, but out of sheer contempt; they shunned the dusty beauty of the golden Ketaka flower also out of contempt, not because it is covered with thorns. (18)

"It seems as if Indra, in love with her, has, in order to protect her, employed his own weapons on every limb of hers—his Vajra ("thunder", also "diamond") in the shape of her ornamental gems and his bow in the shape of their gleam". (19)

"The lock of her hair that surpasses the peacock's train, though it has so many 'moons' on its feathers, has very properly found a place above her face which has but one moon as its friend". (20)

"It is the darkness in the front and on either side, dispelled by the moon of her face, that is tied behind her in the guise of her clearly undulating hair." (21)

## vi

The following passage (Section VIII, verses 107 and 108 and Section IX, verses 1-159) presents Nala as the messenger of the gods in conversation with Damayanti.

"Choose thou one of these lords of the quarters, using thy own judgment,

and crown my mission with success – I am the bearer of a letter that is my own tongue holding the garland of the message of the gods. (107)

“Slender-waisted damsel, cheer up Indra; then, with ever-new dalliance, rescue Agni, immersed in love; or take pity on Yama, or if such be not thy will, choose thou Varuna”. (108)

Thus did Damayanti listen to the message of the lords of the quarters, not out of respect for them, but only from a desire to hear Nala's words, while she was anxious to manifest her reluctance, evident from the hints present in the movements of her eyes and eyebrows. (IX.1)

The daughter of the king of Vidarbha said thus to Nala, the moon of the earth, as if she had not heard the speech conveying the message of the gods delivered by him. (2)

“Ah, I asked thee thy name and family; avoiding these, why hast thou spoken of something else? Owing as thou dost a reply to me herein, is not this thy indebtedness a matter for shame?” (3)

“Thy speech (Sarasvati), incomprehensible in some places and lucid in others with regard to my query, desires to rival the river Sarasvati, visible in some places and faint-streaming in others.” (4)

“Already have I heard thy words, serving as nectar to my ears, but unrelenting is my longing to hear thy name: thirst for water is never allayed by milk nor honey, nor even by something better. (5)

“What dynasty holds such a jewel of a hero as thou art—one that removes all gloom? Eager am I to honour it, great because of thee, but scorned by me, thinking it is one like others”. (6)

When she stopped, having spoken thus, the king highly favoured her again with his words, just as the raincloud favours the Chataka birds tired of crying at the end of summer. (7)

“Well, my tongue is indifferent to both of them, neither is very necessary: verbosity and superficiality of meaning are the two poisons of speech; eloquence consists in speech that is concise and weighty. (8)

“What series of letters, and in what order, is assigned to me as a symbol—all this is idle talk; the words ‘you’ and ‘I’ are certainly able to give effect to our direct relations. (9)

“If my family is not brilliant by nature, where is the propriety in mentioning

it? If it is pure, alas! any such talk would be a mockery, coming as I do as a servant of others. (10)

"Any eagerness to persist in a matter which I have neglected, after deliberating thus, looks ill on thy part as well; the effort of thy words is now in place only with regard to giving a reply to the lords of the quarters. (11)

"Thou who art still persistent! Or, why do I not with a few words comply with thy wish in the matter? Will not thy persistence be satisfied on hearing that I am a scion of the dynasty of the moon? (12)

"Such is the traditional custom among the great that the good do not utter their own names; so I am loth to speak about it: people censure one who deviates from custom". (13)

Saying thus, Nala, the destroyer of enemies, became silent, as does an autumnal peacock, the oppressor of serpents; then Damayanti, blushing at each word, uttered these words, like the female of a swan that bears on each foot the red hue of its beak. (14)

"Though I have heard thee to be the ornament of the dynasty of the moon, my doubt regarding particulars is not removed; great, indeed, is thy skill in deception—silence over certain things and extensive talk about others. (15)

"But I, too must not give a reply to thee, as thou dost not make thy name the nectar of my ears; conversation on my part, too, with a stranger is not compatible with conformity to the custom prevalent among women of birth". (16)

Then Nala, without any reply on account of her retort, said to her with a smile, welcoming in his heart her delightful words: "Fair-eyed one, waste not thy words, I say, such as these, surpassing honey in sweetness, on matters, alien to thee. (17)

"Wilt thou not bring this toil of mine to fruition? Wilt thou not favour any one of the lords of the quarters? Thou shouldst thus honour the gods with words sanctified by being drenched with the nectar of poetic emotion. (18)

"Wilt thou not send to the gods, in the shape of a message, such words as these, detailed and drenched with a flow of sentiment—words that, delivered by me, will act on the gods consumed by the love-god, as rain does on a forest oppressed by fire? (19)

"In proportion as this person delays here, be it for a moment, owing to thy neglect. The love-god hastens in anger at this very moment to make the gods his target. (20)

"Are not Indra's eyes, intent so long on my path, made of thunder? But fie on me, slow in a matter requiring haste, in whom is absent even the quality of a servant of others!" (21)

The king having stopped after saying this, the clever maiden said to herself, as she pondered on the lack of politic wisdom of the gods who were sending him, the love-god of the earth (in beauty), as a messenger to a woman. (22)

"Certainly the king of the waters (Varuna) has directed thee to me, and obviously the king of the dead (Yama) has sent thee; certainly it is the god 'that has the winds' (Indra) who has sent thee; and thou hast been employed by the light that has an upturned face (Agni)". (23)

Then with a secret smile, Damayanti, that indescribable ornament of the race of devoted women, had her mouth distinctly inclined to the graceful manner of a talk with him again. (24)

"Useless joking would be insolence; a 'no', 'no' to one like thee would amount to censure; not replying would be slighting thee; so I am willing to give thee a reply. (25)

"Even out of kindness how did that message of the gods come into being with regard to one who is characterised by mortality? Or, in what words do not the great express their pleasure unto those who are by nature devoted in all humility to them! (26)

"Strange! How can it be proper that Indra, who shines in the company of celestial nymphs, should on my account have a deep disgrace like that of a lake profusely charming with swans, on account of cranes? (27)

"Tell me, what is a mortal woman in the presence of divine nymphs, though she, too, may be beautiful where they are not? Do not brass ornaments lend beauty to a poor woman's limbs that are without any ornaments of gold? (28)

"Let the gods pour forth words in any way they please; my ears are deaf even to a letter of them: how can a young doe conceive even a mere desire, improper as it is, with regard to Airavata, the lord of elephants?" (29)

Then said a girl friend who was told something in the ears by Damayanti, who bent her face just after saying these words, "Listen to what she has told me, bashfully entering my heart, and which goes out through the medium of my mouth. (30)

[What Damayanti whispered to her]

"Having long cherished Nala in my heart, I am afraid even to bring such a thought to my mind; for the honour of a chaste woman, fragile like a lotus-fibre, is rent asunder even at the slightest inconstancy. (31)

"Why do not the gods ask their own all-seeing intelligence if my thoughts ever touched any one else, Nala excepted, even at the command of sleep? (32)

"Perhaps the gods caused their sleepless selves to sleep solely to avoid the knowledge that I am another's wife; otherwise, being themselves the (saving) pilots on the ocean of vice, how could they knowingly touch such a woman even with their thoughts? (33)

"It is merely a favour that they have taken a fancy even to a mortal being like me; if, however, a favour is to be done, may they be able, being pleased, to give me, by way of alms, him alone. (34)

"Moreover, hear my unshakable promise if that king wed me not, myself will act as an enemy of my life, using fire, hanging or water as an agent. (35)

"In danger, when good deeds in no wise save, one ought to do even what is forbidden; when the highway is slippery with rain-water, even the wise go by a wrong way at times. (36)

"I, a woman, can never give a satisfactory reply to the eloquent gods; so mayst thou be a commentator, not an adversary, of this series of aphorisms, the words spoken by me". (37)

Thus dismissed, after being rebuffed, the messenger, though courteous, spoke some lively words, like a sweet-voiced cuckoo, enraged by a boy repeatedly mimicking its cooing for fun. (38)

"Strange, it is funny, those gods themselves have set their hearts on thee, and even thou art averse to them: does anywhere a treasure-trove come to a penniless man, and he rejects it by raising a barrier of speech? (39)

"Moon-faced girl, I hold thee in high esteem, neglecting all other women,

because Indra loves thee; but thou hast spurned that esteem, turning thy back even at such a good present before thee. (40)

“A mortal woman does not want a god! It is something new that I have heard from thee; why is it that this thy evil obstinacy is not altogether removed even by some well-wishing teacher? (41)

“It is by the grace of the gods that a man attains divinity by shaking off his mortal nature : how can one wish to include iron that is treated with specially prepared mercury among objects made of iron? (42)

“Thou who callest thyself wise—art thou not ashamed of being attached to Nala, leaving aside Indra? O thou who hast thighs soft as the border of the palm, I say deliberately, thou art superior even to the camel which neglects the sugar-cane, but likes the Sami. (43)

“Alas, why art thou mistaken about the goodness of a mortal, leaving aside Indra, the leader of all the gods? It is useless toil for the current of breath to go through the nostrils, avoiding the mouth. (44)

“The wise sacrifice their bodies in the fire of austerities with a view to the attainment of heaven to follow in another life; that very heaven, growing restless, is pulling thee forcibly by the hand, but foolish one, thou movest not. (45)

“If, without Nala, thou art intent on hanging thyself, Indra will take thee away, as thou swingest in the air; for he is known as the lord of all that exists in the sky. Who doth neglect his legitimate share? (46)

“If, bereft of Nala, thou enter the fire, that would be a mighty favour done to the god of fire; for thou wouldst then thyself give him thy body, to him unobtainable even by praying long. (47)

“Varuna indeed will carry off the palm, if, leaving fire, thou enter the waters; for then he, the lord of the waters, will ever carry his life, known to be thyself, on his bosom on the exterior as well. (48)

“Clever as thou art, if thou devise other modes of death, owing to these hindrances, thou wouldst indeed oblige the god of death, thyself coming to his abode as a welcome guest. (49)

“Or, perhaps it is an affirmative assertion of thine, disguised as a negative; crookedness in speech does certainly befit thee: the mouth of a clever woman is a mine of that Poetic Suggestion, of which this is a flash. (50)



"How long am I to whirl, Damayanti, falling into the eddies of the mellifluous current of thy speech? Discarding thy shame a little, make it clear who among the great gods is to be favoured by thee. (51)

"Is Indra to thy liking, the lord of the direction that has the temples of the Airavata elephant for hard and plump breasts? In my opinion no one except the thousand-eyed Indra is able to survey the beauty of thy limbs. (52)

"Damayanti, be pleased with him; let him, the lord of the world, continuously enwrap his body with thrills caused by the contact of thy limbs—thrills (acting as) sharp thorns to the eyes of his wife Sachi. (53)

"Graceful one, I have come to know the truth; thou art spontaneously attached to Agni, the god of fire; how can thy desire, born as thou art of a Kshatriya family, turn to any one other than that valiant god? (54)

"Thou who art the one devoted woman shouldst not turn back thy mind at any cost from the god of fire, for fear of thy body being burnt; at the moment of ordeal his snowlike action on women that are chaste hath been a hundred times proved. (55)

"Thou whose conduct is just, must have made Yama, the arbiter of just conduct, the guest of thy heart; this order of things appears commendable likewise to me. Indeed, the union of the fit with the fit looks bright. (56)

"Without the fear of death, spend with him limitless ages like a moment in amorous sports, without the slightest break, in the region shining pure with the lustre of the star known as Agastya. (57)

"Or, tender like a Shirisha flower, dost thou desire the god of the waters, Varuna, who by virtue of his watery nature is the lord of the order of tender objects? Leaving all others, did not the night, too, for the same reason, choose the cool-rayed moon? (58)

"Slender-waisted one, with him play as thou wilt in that ocean of milk, to which, profusely beautiful, Vishnu, abandoning the heavens, resorted day and night". (59)

What he thus said was obviously both heard and not heard by her, whose cheek and ear were resting on one side on the palm of her hand—(she heard it) because she was eager for his words: (she heard it not) because of the mockery involved in taking a fancy to the gods. (60)

After that, Damayanti kept silence for a long while with her face downcast;

then, in a moment, the clever maiden spoke to him, pitifully heaving a deep sigh. (61)

"Piercing my guilty ears with that heap of needles, the evil message of the lords of the quarters, thou hast clearly done to me, as if I were dead, something that befits the nature of a messenger of the god of death. (62)

"Those evil words of thine, the false calumny in regard to me, issuing forth from thy mouth, and taking an inky colour, as if assuming the form of a script, are causing sharp pains like worms, having entered my ears". (63)

Then a girl-friend, induced by Damayanti, said to him, "This my friend, with one tongue that has taken a resolute vow of silence, is paying homage to bashfulness; with another—myself—she is speaking to thee. (64)

[What Damayanti said through her friend]

"Tomorrow comes the Svayamvara for me to adore that king with my wreath of choice; this day, standing in its way, wishes to depart, preceded by my life; so, to me be so kind as to rest (here) today; I wish to pass this day, looking at thee; the bird described my beloved as similar to thee in beauty, sketching his figure with its nails. (65-66)

"The Creator cheated thy eyes in as much as they do not see the beauty of thy face; so, let them, too, attain tomorrow the end of their existence, looking at that beauty in Nala's face. (67)

"Alas, how is it that on the occasion of my marriage with fire as the witness, thou dost not wish to acquire the easily gained, noble and lasting friendship of one who is thy peer? (68)

"With folded hands do I beg. Let me not be oppressed by thee in any way on account of the Dikpala gods; please, thou shouldst not say such things today; I have my eyes filled too much with the rush of tears. (69)

"Far from my choosing the lords of the quarters, I am not even looking at the beauty of Nala with any ardour, because it is present in thee. I am making my life a handful of straw in the fire of womanly devotion; what is then the love-god who is but ashes? (70)

"The woman who forsakes that 'wish-fulfilling' Chintamani jewel—Virtue—placed by Jina among the three jewels of his creed, for the sake of the ashes

of the fire of Shiva's wrath', does indeed scatter those very ashes over her family". (71)

Hearing those words, born of nectar and serving as oblations of butter in the fire of his love, Nala deemed himself not the messenger of the god of death, as declared by her, but the ruthless god of death himself. (72)

Rent though his heart was by her pathetic words of grief, he wished not to deviate from his duty as a messenger. Secretly heaving a sigh, slowly he said—he, the Brihaspati of clever speech. (73)

"Timid one, if Indra, the lord of heaven, ask at any time the (all-giving) Kalpa tree for thee—the tree situate on his own courtyard, how wouldst thou avoid being the mistress of his life? A request to that tree goes not in vain. (74)

"It Agni, wishing to win thee, perform a sacrifice designed to fulfil all desires, himself offering in his own manifestations the oblation that is his share, how can that Vedic rite prove futile? (75)

"Tell me what recourse is there for thee, if Yama ask for thy hand the sage Agastya, who ever lives in the direction owned by Yama, and would perforce be inclined to give him a commendable tribute? (76)

"Who know how many wish-cows are in the mansion of Varuna for the purpose of sacrifice? If he asks even one of them for thy hand, thou wouldst at once be in the possession of Varuna. (77)

"If, owing to thy disregard of her husband, Sachi, Indra's wife, absent herself, devoted as she is to her husband, with a view to creating obstacles, how could the Svayamvara itself, attended by rival suitors, take place in the face of the (mutual) slaughter of the crowd of kings? (78)

"Dost thou then wish to see a hand-to-hand fight among the kings present, the rods detached from their umbrellas dancing about, and no one knowing what their own mouths, angrily reviling one another, mean to say? (79)

"Lotus-eyed one, if, on the occasion of thy marriage, the god of fire burns in anger, but not in flame, rendering futile the toil of blowing on the part of the priests, what ceremonial rite can Nala perform without Fire to witness it? (80)

"Good-natured maid, if the god of death makes someone of the family of

the bride or the groom his guest, would not the Svayamvara, though magnificent, prove a failure? (81)

"If the other god, Varuna, being angry with Nala, prohibits the waters from attending the ceremony, he being their master, how will thy father, tell me, give thee to Nala, though the latter out of greed might hold his hand (even without the presence of water)? (82)

"Damayanti, this have I said, highly beneficial to thee; reflect, laying aside delusion: when the gods are determined to thwart, what mortal can acquire even the thing that is in his hands?" (83)

Weighing in her mind these words of his, she was convinced that so it was; and with a gush of tears let loose, she then reduced her eyes to the condition of the months of Shravana and Bhadra. (84)

Two tear-drops, dark in contact with the collyrium paint (of her eyes), falling on her bosom like a couple of bees from her eyes, blooming lotuses, with the hope of reaching her bud-like breasts, gleamed like two blue, unsteady gems. (85)

A lake she was then of the sentiment of love, shaken by the oncoming arrows of the flower-arrowed love-god; and, with a stream of tears bent on gushing, her eyes had the grace of the blue lotus with the stalk attached thereto. (86)

Then did she wail in a gentle voice, aggrieved at the certainty of not getting her love; she was going mad, she was weeping, her patience was gone, she was bewildered, the joy of her heart vanished, her reason rocked. (87)

[Damayanti's plaint]

"Fire of love-god, hurry on, spread the expanse of thy fame made up of my ashes. Creator, devoted as thou art to devouring the fruit of the longing of others, descend to hell today, content with my fruitless life. (88)

"Thou heart of mine, heavily consumed by the fire of separation! If thou art of iron, why dost thou not melt? Thou that art penetrable by love-god's arrows, nor art thou thunder; wilt thou not say why thou art not rent as under? (89)

"Life, why lingerest thou? Away, quick; the heart, thy abode, is afire!

Even now thou leavest not thy false repose; strange is this indolence, such as thine. (90)

"Eyes, great as ye are, how did false and vicious desire come to hoax even you? Hundred years long, wash with your tears the sin that prevents your seeing the beloved's charm! (91)

"Mind, what thou wishest never becomes mine; I get neither my beloved nor death—both desired by thee; so dost thou wish for my separation from my beloved; (in that way) by thy grace, separation may not be my lot. (92)

"Among my enemies, beseech I will not, with pitiful entreaties, the overhostile love-god, but I will beg the wind of the south: let it scatter my ashes towards the direction where my beloved is; for the practice of hostilities ends with killing. (93)

"The ages run on, but this moment halts; how much shall I bear? Nor will death come to me; for clear it is, never will my beloved forsake my inner being, my mind will not forsake him, and the life-breaths will not forsake the mind. (94)

"Ye gods, who have drunk up the ocean of your kindness, one spray of which is able to remove my burning heat? Will not a crore of women superior to me rise in a trice for your pleasure, at the exertion of a mere thought of yours? (95)

"Or, the rainy weather of my own tears day and night, having created by force the season of rains, how will the gods, sleeping soundly, hear my words? Will not my words be as weeping in the wild? (96)

"Nala, dost thou not see this suffering of one who is devoted heart and soul to thee? How often, alas, on lake after lake, have I looked for that bird which might speak to thee! But the Creator concealed even that. (97)

"Kind one, if thou knowest my mind to be devoted to thy feet, why not take pity on me? But there is no question of thy offence; the Creator is to blame for plunging the mind of others in gloom. (98)

"Truly it will come to thy ears, Damayanti died for thy sake; lord, favour me even then with a jot of kindness, if not now! (99)

“Thou who art an (all-giving) Kalpa tree to suppliants! Something do I beg of thee: this my heart is eager to burst; but finding in the heart an exit in the (resulting) cleft, let not him that is equal to my life depart with my miserable life”. (100)

In spite of his being (then) in her company, the emotion of forlorn love, subdued in his heart by his duty as a messenger of the *dikpala*<sup>1</sup> gods, but bursting with force at these pathetic words of his beloved, made the king frantic again at once. (101)

Then forgetting everything about his mission on behalf of Indra and other things, Nala said thus unwittingly, imagining in his beloved actions blended with graceful gestures lingering in his fancy. (102)

[Nala throws off his disguise and addresses Damayanti]

“O my beloved, for whom art thou lamenting, and drenching thy face, alas, with drops of tears? With graceful sidelong glances, dost thou not see this Nala bowing before thee? (103)

“Thou with eyes that have pupils like sapphire! It is thy expert knowledge of the figure *Binducyutaka* (Dropping of the Anusvara) that shines forth in the guise of the flow of thick drops of tears; for doubtless thou art thereby thyself making this *samsara* (world) *sasara* (full of substance). (104)

“Why art thou turning thy face into a toy-lotus placed on thy hand that has discarded the lotus? On thy bosom, that has banished ornaments through no fault of theirs, how long wilt thou create a string of pearls with the streams of thy tears? (105)

“With my hand, let me first wipe off these ill-omened, oncoming tears from thy eyes; with my head will I then wipe off my offence, along with the dust of thy lotus-like feet. (106)

“Like the star Rohini, let the ruddy floral spray of the rays of the rubies of my crown worship the moon that is in the form of the bright nails of thy feet! Thou who art angry without a cause, give up, give up thy ire. (107)

"If thou art in the least offended with me, humbly do I pay deep homage to thee; angry one, if thou remainest even for a while, bowing thy face, I bow at thy very feet. (108)

"With the plenitude of thy power thou mayst favour me or not; but what toil is there in accepting a mere obeisance? What a measure of difference! Thou art an (all-giving) Kalpa creeper to suppliants, but miserly in casting even a look at me! (109)

"Tender as thou art, how art thou bearing the havoc of the love-god's arrows? Or, perhaps the arrows of the fish-bannered love-god turn back and rebound, falling on thy bosom armoured with firm-based breasts. (110)

"With the corners of thy lips express tiny smiles; make the fringe of thy eyebrows move gracefully; be pleased playfully to cast on me looks that frequent the path of the corners of the eyes. (111)

"Bring to an end the rainy season of tear-drops; with thy smile give me the joys of moonlight; let the two Khanjana (wagtail) birds that are thy eyes play on me; let thy face be as a lotus in bloom. (112)

"Inside my ears, with a garland of letters, bring about a boundless play of a flow of nectar! Thou with maddening eyes, with the charm of thy smiles make my eyes feast, as it were, on milk-rice after a fast. (113)

"Beloved, adorn half my throne; ah no, adorn my lap! Oh, I said that by mistake; mayst thou forgive! What seat can there be for thee except my bosom? (114)

"Thou who hast studied the guile of the love-god's arrows! If thou who art inside my heart comest outside to my bosom, my heart, folded in thee, will no more dread his arrows. (115)

"Clasp me round; let the arrows of the love-god be left without any entry into our two hearts, joined one to the other; this firm expanse of my bosom is the proper handmaid of thy inflexible breasts. (116)

"I long for thy lips, by the flow of whose honey honeyed are thy words, my ears being the witness; on the tableland of thy breasts, let my finger-nails bring about a wonder—the rise of the crescent of the moon. (117)

"Dost thou not personify the love-god's drama? Thou dost indeed 'hold

the thread' in the shape of the clear line of hairs on thy body; well, the central gem in thy pearl-string does look beautiful, as if it were the hero of the play that takes delight in thy graceful gestures; and, the gem on thy crown, obscuring the moon in brightness, is as the jester of the play, a noble Brahmana, with a gem on the crest of his head. (118)

"Let thy lower lip, red like a Bimba fruit, the lip on which is engraved 'a group of eight lines' indicating the auspicious character of the birth of thy love, become like a Bhurja leaf from the (crimson) colours provided by the marks of biting left by my teeth. (119)

"Be kind with thy words; favour me with thy kisses; be pleased to have thy breast served by me; for thou alone art the life of Nala as the night is of the lunar rays". (120)

Then coming to his senses, he became conscious that he was disclosing his identity; and, seeing Damayanti coming to herself, he spoke these words, having recollected his past; just as a sage, on attaining right knowledge, becomes conscious of the soul revealing itself, and just as he, seeing the Cosmic Matter near at hand, makes (relevant) utterances, having recollected the impressions of his past lives. (121)

"Ah, why did I reveal myself! What will Indra in this matter think of me! Reverently bowing before him, and then confounded with shame, I will not look at even the expression of his feelings. (122)

"Ah me! this great task of Indra I have forsaken; for I disclosed my name for nothing; Hanumant and others shed lustre on the messenger's path with their fame, while I have done so with the laugh of my foes. (123)

"I did not purpose wrong; but I know what others will say—others who speak of Vishnu, exerting himself for the protection of men, as the 'oppressor of men' (Janardana), but give the name Shiva (Benign) to the god who destroys the life of the world during the universal deluge. (124)

"But, why is this heart of mine bursting under the weight of shame since its innocence is known to the gods? Let them know this rugged truth, but who will put his hand on the mouths of men? (125)

"Owing to this consciousness (of my duty), my toil was bearing fruit; but that consciousness was eclipsed by the powerful Creator; Indra himself is powerless to remedy a thing liable to destruction at the caprice of fate". (126)



As Nala was thus deploring the disclosure of his identity, brought about by himself under a mighty wave of delusion, the kind-hearted golden swan-king came along swiftly, wishing to extricate him, as he lay thus buried in grief. (127)

To Nala, who looked up at the sound of its wings, saying, 'Here is that bird', said the swan, "Cruel one, bring her not to extreme despair; after this she will surely die. Being conscious of thy offence in respect of the gods, having exerted thyself so much for the success of their affair, thou need not be a false witness; the pure-heartedness of the good has themselves for witness". (128-129)

Thus consoled by the bird which, having said this, went away after taking leave of both Nala and Damayanti, the king gently spoke to her, offering in his mind obeisance to the lords of the quarters. (130)

"How much torment shall I give thee—torment fruitless in generating love for the gods? Let them be kind to me for my guileless mission or punish me for my offence. (131)

"This my madness stood me in good stead; for (thanks to it) I felt not the pangs of separation from thee; even from an evil issues the abating of an evil, just as from ignorance proceeds the attenuation of a sin. (132)

"The fire of the grief of separation which was thine was thus kind to me, in spite of my having harassed thee sorely; for it today took pity on thee, maddening me, and making me reveal myself. (133)

"These gods are devotedly longing for thee, but thou wishest to make even me thy slave; do what thou wilt, reflecting well; let not repentance, once felt, attack thee in the rear for naught. (134)

"Indifferent, I say this to thee, not out of fear of the gods, nor because I am pining with love; even if my death do thee good, that would serve only to repay my debt for thy love". (135)

Just as the rich beauty of the spring beams forth with the wide-expanding voice of the cuckoo, so was Damayanti fervently delighted with these nectar-like words, pleasant and true, spoken by Nala. (136)

Damayanti who had been censuring her own mind, which had been gravitating to the messenger of the gods, though she had held it in check, think-

ing of her duty as a chaste woman, gave up hate as well as censure, having now ascertained him to be Nala in her mind. (137)

She had been censuring love-god thus in her mind—"Mind-born as thou art, the mind of mortals is thy parent; art thou not ashamed to plunge it in sin? Thou hast put an end to the tradition of worthy sons". (138)

The usual description of her body was that it was a flower, but it was not particular as to what flower it was. At that moment, in the rainy season created by her tears of joy, the hairs on her body, standing erect, declared it to be a Kadamba blossom. (139)

The succession of gestures accompanying the ravings uttered by Nala, removed Damayanti's mistaken idea that he had said so, considering himself to be discovered by her; for she was wailing, addressing Nala. (140)

After that, the bashful Damayanti could not speak to Nala; as she had formerly spoken to him unabashed, face to face, she was now for that very reason immersed in an ocean of shame. (141)

When she failed to give a reply to her beloved even indirectly, (by whispering it) in the ears of a girl friend, the girl herself said to him laughingly, "Owing to her bashfulness, silence is now thy beloved's treasure. (142)

"Hear from my mouth the mystic doctrine of love which she uttered, making streams of tears the guest of thy feet, thine, who wast depicted by herself in a portrait". (143)

[What Damayanti had said, addressing the portrait]

"Ornament of the lunar dynasty, doubtless the swan itself did not tell thee about me, whose life was in despair owing to thy absence; otherwise, how is this cruelty in as much as it is killing me possible in one like thee? (144)

"The moon is surpassed by thy face, the love-god by thy beauty; why are they both resolved to kill me? If they are so, because I am thine, then indeed, victory is mine; for what the gods conceive in their minds goes not in vain. (145)

"In vain does the moon wish to rub off its dark spot with the ashes of my limbs consumed by its rays; but, will it even thereby resemble thy face? For stained will it be again by the killing of a woman. (146)

"Be pleased to give thy arrows to the love-god; let him kill me with them, setting aside his flowery arrows; breathing my last with my mind centred on thee, I will conquer him like a straw, becoming thyself. (147)

"Devoted as I am to thy feet, what is it to me if the Vedas sing the virtues of the gods? The night lily would never rejoice, when bathers in waters sang the praise of the sun. (148)

"Today let me rather die than live; otherwise thou wouldst not know my love for thee. Lord of my life! Thou who art more than my life! From my having died for thee, believe me to have possessed thyself as my only support. (149)

"The sacred vow of Kshatriyas, common to all suppliants, namely, protection even from the terror of the thunderbolt, is in thy case grievously broken, religious defaulter as thou art, not protecting me even from flowery arrows. (150)

"I am thine, yet alas! thou sparest that false god of love out of respect for his being a god, though he is about to kill me; pray, know that love-god to be a Chandala; he is the friend of the spring who makes his arrows. (151)

"It is on lesser and lesser enemies that the wise should first whet their prowess; for, burning on grass, gradually does fire destroy dried cowdung and numbers of trunks of trees. (152)

"How great, too, will be thy offence against the gods, if thou be kind to me, my choice being free? Being gratified by thee at sacrifices, the gods, in order to save their face, will not even mention it (to thee). (153)

"Let them, too, go to the Svayamvara as they like; appeasing those very gods, I will choose thee; even they will somehow be moved to pity; surely they too are not love-god nor thyself." (154)

[Damayanti's friend addresses Nala]

"This river of the essence of honey, with isles of silence at every step, was loosed by Damayanti, subject to a confused emotion of bashfulness and love, on seeing thee even in a portrait. (155)

"Thy love-god is a Chandala who is not touched nor looked at, and who is called deformed, perhaps because, when vanquished by thee, one of his fingers was cut off. Making friends with the Spring in the jungle, and entering my friend's heart, he is stealing her life; and, let the directions on that account wait upon thy fame". (156)

Then the king, his head drooping with shame, took his departure, promising to go to the assembly of kings in company with the gods, as Damayanti herself had told him unseen by others. (157)

As Damayanti, in her anxiety to meet her beloved on the morrow, was rapidly shedding streams of tears—streams with reeds in the shape of high and low thrills on the surface of her cheeks, even that one night consisting of four watches was hard for her to pass, owing to her pangs of love; so it seems the Creator decreed all nights to have three watches, in mercy to her. (158)

To those gods, Indra and the others, capable of visualizing the story of everything that ever happens to the people of the three worlds, the king quickly and sorrowfully related the whole truth of his mission to her as it actually took place. (159)

*vii*

The following extract Section X, Verses 1-8, describes Damayanti's Swayamvara.

Then came to the Swayamvara highborn princes in chariots, expert in arms and the scriptures, beautiful like love-god's magic forms, and surpassing Kubera in wealth. (1)

No highborn prince was there who was not the object of love-god's arrows nor any who did not go; as the crowds of kings were going simultaneously, not even a trace of the earth remained without being a path. (2)

As worthy heroes were going to win the princess, the unworthy to carry her away by force, others to see, and yet others to wait on the rest, the directions were left to themselves. (3)

All the inhabitants of the directions having departed, with that beauty of the world as their aim, the spaces of the directions felt a relief from the suffering caused by the pressure of these people living in them. (4)

So crowded were the highways with soldiers that even sesamum seeds, scattered over them, would not reach the ground, any king who could there manage to make headway felt as if he had already obtained Damayanti. (5)

A certain king, with his way barred by those in front of him, and pushed by those behind deemed himself unsuccessful, though he was in the position of "Successful" seeds pressed in a machine. (6)

The flags of the capital of the king of Vidarbha, their free ends fluttering, seemed to beckon the kings who were getting late from their inability to proceed, one after another, owing to the congestion on the way. (7)

On the earth, the trotting, white horses of the kings, going in the front, were drawing behind them a richly caparisoned force of elephants going towards Kundina, which an array of mules followed; while in the nether world the serpent Karkotaka, going in the front along with the serpent Kambala, was pulling up Vasuki's army of serpents moving towards Kundina, followed by the serpent Ashvatara. (8)

### *viii*

The following passages (Section XI, verse 129 and Section XIII, verse 36) show Nala as the only object of Damayanti's love.

Having (thus) met all those valiant gods and kings-countless they were and lucky, hopeful in heart and unequalled in merit - but forsaking them all at the same time, the beautiful Damayanti, of hidden feelings, aiming only at one man, Nala—an ocean of knowledge, a man whose beauty was beyond the range of speech and joy unbounded—resembled, in being wholly devoted to him, the doctrine of the Upanishads. (XI.129)

Just as in the presence of a diversity of doctrines, people do not believe in the truth of monism, the fifth alternative, though truer; four other theories, wishing to win this (faith), being engaged in preventing such a belief (in monism) from gaining ground: similarly Damayanti, in the face of this doubt about Nala, did not believe in the reality of the fifth alternative, though more genuine than the rest, four other persons, desirous of winning her having prevented her from acquiring such a trust. (XIII. 36)

### *ix*

The verses 70 and 75 from Section XVII present a scholastic debate.

"Even the sage Panini opined that both sexes should indulge in passion, when he said that salvation was for eunuchs. (70)

"He who propounded a system of doctrines to prove that the salvation of sentient beings is a condition similar to that of stones is exactly as you know him to be, a perfect ox, when you have examined him. (75)

x

Verse 153 of Section XXI is about Damayanti's enchanting voice:

"If in a place where sugar forms the soil, and which is tilled after it has been gratified by rainclouds whose water is honey, there should grow a sugarcane plant, with cream cakes as a fertiliser; and if it bears fruit by virtue of being watered with vine juice, then to distinguish thy voice even from this, the superlative suffix would have the word 'sweet' as its base!

(153)

xi

Damayanti's union with Nala is described in the following verses from Section XXII, verses 1-16, 32, 84 and 150:

The king, after he had finished the evening rites, his mind at the sight of the western glow recalling his beloved's lips, came to the palace where Damayanti was on the seventh floor. (1)

He set himself upon a couch with a bed ready in the middle, which had been just left by his beloved, when she went forward to receive him. He caused her to sit as well, and described the evening twilight in verse. (2)

"Grace with thy look the region that is Varuna's spouse. It seems to be washed with liquid red lac, and covered with saffron paste. (3)

"From the lofty summit of the sky, fallen is the sun, a rock of red chalk torn asunder. The dust raised by it, when it was dashed to pieces by the fall, now emerges as the evening glow. (4)

"Has the west suddenly been reddened by the crests of the tame fowls belonging to the line of Sabara houses on the peak of the Sunset Mount; bristling up during their hourly crowings? (5)

"Look, the Evening twilight now takes up her position as doorkeeper of the night, the day being debarred from entry. She holds a cane painted with vermilion, the rays issuing from the swiftly setting sun. (6)

"Shiva the great dancer, after meditating on the mighty goddess of the evening twilight, bright as red arsenic, now perhaps dances in the glow of the (setting) sun; his body, the sky itself, garlanded with rows of stars. (7)

"Look, the moon-crested Shiva, the dancer of the eve, decorates the horizon with the broken pieces of his ornamental wreath of bones torn asunder in dancing; these now assume the guise of myriads of stars. (8)

"Death the Hunter slew the day, an elephant whose scarlet dots are clearly visible. The beautiful evening twilight is his streaming blood, while the stars are the pearls which were inside his temples. (9)

"In times of yore, while marrying Parvati, the mighty Shiva, whose clothing is the regions of the sky, wore, I ween, the region rosy with the evening glow, at the festal time of assuming flower-dyed crimson attire. (10)

"Fair-eyed one, while marrying Sati and Parvati, did the sky-clad Shiva acquire as his attire both the red regions, east and west, in order to use the two twilights as flower-dyed crimson vesture? (11)

"The mendicant sun wanders through all the regions, taking with him a 'stick'. Like an ascetic, he hath put on a scarlet robe, the evening sky, plunging into the ocean at dusk. (12)

"Selling that lump of gold, the sun, that was tested on the touchstone-like Mount of Sunset, the evening glow being the trail left by the abrasion, the sky hath taken in return cowries, the stars! (13)

"Death hath plucked yonder ripe pomegranate, the orb of the sun. Eating the seeds, he cast off its rind, the evening twilight; while he seems to have thrown out the starry stones of the fruit. (14)

[Interpolation]

"Look, the sky is decked with splinters of crystal rocks flying up from the Mount of Kailasa, owing to the impact of Shiva's feet lighting upon it, while he danced at the end of the evening rites". (16)

"Yonder lamp, the sun, had left soot in the sky which resembles a vessel placed above it, mouth downward. Has the soot dropped on the earth as darkness, becoming heavy with its growing volume? (32)

"In the use of words, popular custom can destroy the pride of grammar. For the moon is not called Mrigin, though it has a Mriga (deer); as it is called Shashin, because it has a Shasha (hare). (84)

"May the divine moon delight our hearts! In the gay festival of ceremonial bathing forming part of the marriage of the love-god with the love-goddess,

the moon, looking like a jar with a thousand apertures, showers nectar, its beams, which fall through the holes bored in it by Rahu's jaws, each time he comes to gorge the moon".

From *Naishadhiyacharitam*, 12th century

Tr. by Krishna Handiqui

## In Praise of Krishna

JAYADEVA I

JAYADEVA (c. 12th century), whose birth-place is still disputed by scholars, is the author of *Gitagovindam* (Gītāgovindam), one of the most popular collections of songs about Krishna and Radha. Excerpts from *Gitagovindam* are given below representing different aspects of Krishna.

1

### The Delightful Krishna

"The sky is dark with clouds,  
 Tamala trees darken the forest,  
 The night frightens him!  
 Radha, you take him home!"  
 They leave at Nanda's order,  
 passing through the trees in the forest,  
 and the love-play of Radha and Krishna  
 triumphs on the bank of river Yamuna.

(I. 1)

•

O Krishna  
 you upheld the Vedas,  
 supported the earth on your back,  
 upheld the world,  
 tore up the demon Hiranyakashipu,  
 deceived the demon Bali,  
 destroyed the warrior class,  
 conquered Ravana,  
 wielded the plough,  
 spread compassion,  
 annihilated the barbarians,



O Krishna, you manifest in ten incarnations,  
Our obeisance to you:

(I. 16)

•

When spring came, Radha,  
with limbs tender as *vasanti* flowers,  
was tortured by the delirium of passion  
and wandered in the woodlands  
in quest of her beloved Krishna.  
It was then, a *sakhi* came to her  
and said in a tender tone:

(I. 27)

•

In spring, when the tender southern breeze fondles  
the quivering creepers of clove,  
the woodland bower resounds  
with droning bees and crying cuckoos.  
Hari here plays in eager dance  
with lovely maidens  
in this pleasant spring that brings  
agony to those parted in love.

(I.28)

•

Spring is the season filled with the wailings  
of women parted from the one they love,  
when humming swarms of playful bees  
smother the clustering *bakula* flowers.

(I. 29)

In spring, the tender *tamala* sprouts  
spread the fragrance of deer-musk.  
The long, tapering *kimshuka* buds, like the  
nails of the god of love, pierce young hearts.

(I.30)

•

Spring, solicitous of the young,  
pleasant with the pollens of *madhavi* flowers  
languid with the scent of *malati*  
maddens even the hearts of hermits.

(I. 33)

In spring, tremulous young creepers cling  
to the mango tree and make it blossom in joy.

Vrindavan forest is washed  
 by the meandering holy waters of the Yamuna.  
 The wind, friend of the god of love,  
 is laden with the perfume of *ketaki* flowers  
 and scatters the pollens of *mallika*  
 to fill the woodlands with incense, as if  
 to burn the hearts of those parted in love.

(I.36)

\*

Bees shake the mango sprouts  
 hunting the aroma of honey  
 and the shrill of playful cuckoos  
 sears the ears of pining lovers.  
 The separated lovers spend the days of spring  
 contemplating the delight  
 at the moment of union  
 with their beloved, dear as life.

(I 38)

\*

[ Sakhi said to Radha:]

His dark body smeared with sandal paste  
 is draped in yellow silk and garland of wild flowers  
 In love-play his jewelled ear-rings  
 dangle on his smiling cheeks.  
 Look, Hari is sporting with a cluster  
 of wanton charming maidens.

(I.40)

2

The Careless Krishna  
 Hari was making love to any maiden  
 without distinction, in the woodland,  
 Radha's pride was shattered.  
 Thinking herself to be humiliated,  
 she, with broken pride and jealousy,  
 hides in her bower  
 with its swarm of humming bees.  
 She sat depressed  
 and told her friend the secret.

(II.1)

The nectar of his lips flows through the notes  
of his melodious flute.

When glancing sideways  
his crown sways  
and his ear-rings dangle  
on his cheeks.

My heart recalls Hari;  
here in his love-dance,  
playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

(II. 2)

\*

His tendril-tender arms still thrill  
with the embrace of a thousand *gopis*  
The ornaments on his arms, ankles and breast  
glisten, removing the surrounding darkness.

(II.5)

\*

Sakhi, Krishna is sporting  
with other *gopis* now, deserting me.  
Yet I desire him.  
I forgive his guilt.  
I feel no anger, not even accidentally.  
Instead I contemplate on his majestic grace.  
Seeing only the good in him  
I am blissful, thinking of him.  
My mind seems not under my control.  
Tell me, sakhi, what can I do?

(II.10)

\*

When in the night  
I reach the lonely forest,  
he hides himself.  
Seeing me looking around,  
anxiously wandering,  
he laughs heartily  
in a mood of passion.

(II.11)

\*

When I hesitate in my first  
tryst of love,  
he skillfully coaxes me  
with flattering words

and shatters my coyness.  
I smile at him tenderly  
as he unfastens my garment.

(II.13)

When I am filled  
with the taste of ecstasy,  
his lotus eyes open a little,  
and watching my vine-like body, collapse.  
Madhu's foe delights in my love.

(II.18)

3

### The Bewildered Krishna

[ Thus lamented Krishna: ]

Radha saw me surrounded  
by gopis and went away,  
I, too, in fear of guilt  
embarrassed, did not stop her!  
Alas, alas, she is gone in anger,  
feeling that she is neglected.

(III.3)

What will she do,  
what will she say to me  
for this long separation from me?  
What need is there  
of wealth, kin, home  
and life itself, without her?

(III.4)

•

Forgive me now,  
never again will I offend you,  
O beautiful Radha, come before me!  
I burn with passion of love.

(III.9)

•

Lotus stalks garland my heart,  
not a necklace of serpents!  
The blue lily- petal around my neck  
is not the streak of poison!  
This sandal paste on my body

is not the crematory ash.  
 Mistake me not for Shiva  
 O Love-God, assail not me,  
 pounce not on me in rage.

(III.11)

## 4

## The Graceful Krishna

[ Sakhi said to Krishna: ]

She cannot stand the fragrant cool sandal.  
 She rejects the soothing moonbeam.  
 Even the soft southern breeze  
 seems to be tainted by poison for her.  
 She pines, parted from you,  
 fearful of the shafts of the love-God,  
 engrossed wholly in you in her thought.

(IV. 2)

In separation from you  
 the couch of flower, artfully prepared,  
 seems like a bed of spikes,  
 She lies there in penance  
 hoping for the rapture of your embrace.

(IV.4)

She prestrates and prays repeatedly:  
 "Madhava, I take refuge at your feet.  
 Were you to abandon me now,  
 even the moonbeams would scorch my body".

(IV.7)

She trembles, she sighs,  
 she laments, she swoons  
 and sinks into revery,  
 she raises herself, then faints,  
 separated from you,  
 If you, O heavenly physician,  
 should soothe her now  
 in her delirium,  
 then only could she be saved.  
 All else has failed.

(IV.19)

## 5

## The Desirous Krishna

[ Returning from Krishna, the Sakhi said to Radha: ]

The southern breeze blows,  
 spreading passion,  
 when the flowers bloom,  
 the heart of the deserted lover is torn.  
 Krishna, who wears the garland of wild-flowers,  
 suffers in your desertion.

(V.2)

He dwells in the wild woods  
 abandoning his luxurious house.  
 He tosses on his bed of earth  
 and murmurs your name.

(V.5)

Delay no longer,  
 O you of the curved hips!  
 The Lord of your heart  
 has gone for the *abhisara*  
 dressed like the god of love himself  
 to enjoy the lover's limitless bliss.  
 Follow him!  
 He now wears the garland of wild flowers  
 waits in the woods by the Yamuna,  
 where the gentle breeze blows,  
 his hands restless,  
 as always, to hold  
 your swelling breasts.

(V.8)

When the birds alight on the branches,  
 leaves flutter  
 and he thinks that you have come.  
 He prepares the couch,  
 and looks around anxiously for you.

(V.10)

Go quickly, my friend,  
 to the darkened shadowy thicket  
 in your blue sari.  
 But first remove  
 those noisy anklets  
 that disturb with their jingle.

(V.11)

Your, fair one,  
 will shine in radiance  
 like lightning  
 with the merit of your accumulated virtues,

lying on the bosom of Krishna,  
 he who is dark  
 with the necklace  
 as of fluttering white cranes on a dark cloud,  
 in the love-play  
 Krishna, beneath you.

(V.12)

He sighs in vain  
 looks around again and again.  
 He enters the forest  
 humming to himself in despair,  
 He prepares your bed again  
 and looks out in the wood expecting you.  
 O Radha, your lover,  
 pierced by the pains of passion  
 is moaning for you.

(V.16)

O love- face  
 unseen, now anxious, looking through the darkness  
 pausing beneath each, tree,  
 as you secretly move  
 and arrive in front of him,  
 your body languorous with desire,  
 seeing you thus, let his desire  
 be fulfilled.

(V.19)

## 6

## The Impertinent Krishna

She sees you everywhere  
 before her mind's eye  
 tasting the nectar of her lips.  
 O Lord Hari!  
 Radha dwells in her bower, distressed.

(VI.2)

Why does not Hari come quickly  
 to meet me?  
 she repeatedly asks the sakhis.  
 Imagining your arrival  
 she dresses herself  
 with all her ornaments:

disappointed, she strips them off.  
 When the leaves flutter,  
 Thinking that you have come  
 she prepares the couch with grace.  
 Thus in a hundred ways  
 she dreams of you.  
 Not another night  
 can that beautiful girl survive without you.

(VI.11)

7

### The Favourite Krishna

As the moon rose higher in the sky  
 and Madhava still delayed,  
 the lonely Radha, wretched in anguish,  
 began to lament aloud:

(VII. 2)

“Could it be that he  
 has gone in pursuit of another woman?  
 Or have those clever festive friends withheld him?  
 Did he lose his way  
 in the labyrinth of the dark forest?  
 Could my lover be really so tired  
 that he is unable to move?  
 Why did he not come  
 to this promised place,  
 this serene bamboo bower.?”

(VII.11)

“When the moon,  
 the friend of the god of love, wanes  
 it calms the surface of my mind.  
 Yet the pale moon  
 reminds me of my love-lorn lover’s face  
 and instils the anguish of desire  
 into my heart.

(VII.21)

“Sakhi, it is no fault of yours  
 if that pitiless rogue  
 wilfully failed to come.  
 He is a libertine.



He wants only delights in loving many women  
as he pleases.

You are not to blame!  
Look at this heart of mine!  
Drawn by the virtues and the grace of my lover,  
surcharged with anguish and eager longing,  
it will go on its own  
to be with my beloved. (VII.30)

"O southern breeze,  
full of fragrance of sandalwood,  
the companion of the god of love,  
forget your vengeance; show pity on me!  
O lifebreath of the world!  
bring Madhava before me  
for even a moment.  
And then you may take away  
the breath of my life. (VII.39)

When I dwell on Krishna  
the company of friends pains  
like the menace of a bitter foe;  
cool wind is like fire,  
and moonbeams burn like poison.  
But even when he is cruel  
my heart is dragged towards him,  
unrestrained in the desire  
to be with my beloved.  
Strangely paradoxical are the ways of love  
of the women with nighty lily eyes. (VII.40)

8

The Ashamed Krishna

[ Radha said to Krishna who has just arrived: ]

Your drowsy red eyes  
for being awake through the night  
betray the intensity of passion  
that you cherish for that other woman.

Alas! alas! go Madhava! go Kesava! leave me!  
do not try to deceive me with your artful words.  
Got after her, you lotus-eyed one,  
she who soothes your grief.

(VIII.2)

No doubt, your heart is as defiled  
as your body now,  
otherwise, how could you deceive one  
so tortured by love's anguish  
who follows you with intense devotion.

(VIII.7)

9

### The Stupefied Krishna

[ Sakhi said to Radha: ]

When the gentle spring wind blows  
Hari comes for the *abhisara*.  
What greater bliss than this  
could you expect in your house!  
Put aside your love-sulk towards Madhava,  
you arrogant woman!

(IX.2)

As you are harsh to the soft-spoken,  
as you are unbending to one who bows,  
displeased with one who desires,  
indifferent to one who is eager;  
is it not but natural  
that to you, perverse one,  
sandal paste is poison,  
cool moon-rays turn to heat,  
snow burns with fire  
and the pleasure of love-play turns painful.

(IX.10)

10

### The Captivated Krishna

[ Krishna said to Radha: ]

If you speak even a few words to me,

the moonbeam gleam of your teeth  
will remove the fearful darkness  
of despair that has come over me, my beloved.  
Like the chakora bird  
my eyes long for the nectar  
of your quivering lips  
that gleams from your moon-face.  
O loved one, O beautiful,  
abandon your baseless pride!  
My heart is consumed with the fire of longing.  
Allow me to sip the honey of your lotus-face.

(X.2)

You are my life, my precious ornament,  
the rare pearl in the ocean of existence,  
Be gracious to me always,  
and my heart shall strive  
to be most worthy of you.

(X. 4)

Speak with your gentle voice  
and I shall brighten your feet with lac;  
your little feet lovelier than hibiscus flowers  
delight my heart,  
your feet, unrivalled in love-play.

(X.7)

Now like a diadem, crown this my head  
with the tender petals of your feet,  
a pleasurable balm for the venom of desire.  
And let it cure me  
suffering from the burning fire of desire.

(X.8)

Why needlessly torture me  
with your silence, O slender one!  
Speak to me softly  
with the unfolding of musical notes.  
Dispel my agony with your glances  
and delight me !

O beautiful Radha,  
do not be indifferent to me, your lover  
so tenderly waiting on you  
and do not desert me!

(X. 13)

## The Blissful Krishna

Pleasing you with coaxing words,  
bowing reverently at your feet,  
he now waits for love-play in his bed  
inside the beautiful bamboo thicket.  
Madhu's foe is faithful to you,  
O foolish one, follow him!

(XI.2)

With the weight of heavy hips  
and swelling breasts,  
go walking languorously  
with the gait of a wild goose,  
with your anklets tinkling.

(XI. 3)

O Radha, do not delay!  
The creepers quivering in the wind  
like a hand gestures you to proceed.  
So quicken your pace  
with thighs tapering as the trunk of a young elephant.

(XI.5)

When wanton maidens  
are excitedly hastening to meet their lovers  
in the dark thicket  
with black unguent on their eyes,  
with garlands of blue  
lotuses on their heads,  
with clusters of *tamala* flowers on their ears,  
With garlands of blue Cotuses on their heads,  
with leaf-designs of musk painted on their breasts  
and wearing dark-blue clothes—  
it seems that the darkness envelops  
them in close embrace.

(XI.11)

When the saffron-bright bodies  
of women rushing to meet their lovers  
sparkle in the darkness,  
dense as foliage of *tamala* leaves,  
darkness becomes the touchstone  
to test the pure gold of their love.

(XI. 12)

Radha glanced at Govinda  
 with downcast eyes  
 and with mixed feelings  
 of doubt and delight.  
 She entered love's dwelling  
 with her anklets tinkling.

(XI.23)

She looked at Hari  
 who desired only her  
 and who for long waited for passionate love-play.  
 She saw the unfolding of desire  
 in his face, overwhelmed with pleasure.

(XI. 24)

His charming face  
 with his quivering glances  
 aroused passion  
 like an autumn pond  
 when wagtails mate  
 in lotus blossom.

(XI. 27)

When Radha met her beloved  
 tears of delight brimmed.  
 Her eyes strained to reach beyond her ears,  
 and so from the exertion of  
 travelling so far, her eyes  
 perspired their precious drops.

(XI. 32)

## 12

## The Ecstatic Krishna

[ Hari thus spoke to his sweetheart: ]

(XII. 1(4))

O Radha, full of desire,  
 place your lotus-feet  
 on this bed of sprouts.  
 Let your petal-soft feet  
 ravage this couch of tender shoots.  
 O dear Radha!  
 Love me, even for a little while.  
 Narayana is faithful now.

(XII.2)

So the encounter in love began,  
when the shuddering of bodies  
hindered firm embrace;  
where the joy of contemplating one another  
with searching looks  
was interrupted by blinkings;  
where the mutual sipping  
of the honey of each other's lips  
was impeded by the utterances  
of small love-cries.  
Yet even these seeming hindrances  
enhanced the delight in love-play.

(XII. 10)

Her tresses tumbled,  
strands of hair loose against  
her cheeks with drops of sweat,  
her lips swollen,  
the splendour of her pearl necklace  
strayed about her firm breaths,  
her girdle loosened,  
suddenly she covered  
her breasts and loins  
with her shy hands  
feeling embarrassed.  
Even then. Radha in all the loveliness  
of her disarray delighted Madhava.

(XII. 15)

[ Radha said to Krishna: ]

"O Delight of the Yadus,  
Your hands are cooler than sandal paste.  
Decorate my breasts with leaf designs of musk;  
my breasts, the twin ritual vessels  
of the god of love.

[Radha said to the Delight of the Yadus who is joyful, eager in love-play to  
delight her:]

(XII.17)

\*Adorn my breasts with leaf designs of musk,  
put colour on my cheeks,  
fasten the girdle around my hips,

twine my heavy braid with flowers,  
fix rows of bangles on my hands,  
and jewelled anklets on my feet."

And thus requested by Radha.

Krishna who wears the yellow garment  
did, as she has asked him to, with pleasure.

(XII.25)

O discerning ones,  
if you are interested in the divine art of music,  
if bent on meditating the glories of Vishnu,  
if enquiring into the doctrine of existence  
or curious about the art of love  
exemplified in the poetic forms;  
then turn to the *Gita Govindam*  
of the scholar-poet Jayadeva  
deeply devoted to Krishna  
and contemplate on it with great delight  
and be enlightened  
with all the nuances of these arts.

From *Gita Govindam*, 12th century

Tr. by Durgadas Mukhopadhyay

## The Life of Dharmanatha

### HARISHCHANDRA

DHARMASARMABHYUDAYA (Dharmasāramābhyudaya) is a *mahakavya* written by Harishchandra (Hariscandra 12th century) son of Ardardeva and Radha. It narrates the life of Lord Dharmanatha, the 15th Jaina Trithankara, in twenty-one cantos. It starts with the traditional benedictory verses offering homage to Tirthankaras, preceptors, other great personalities, poets, etc. It describes the king Mahasena of Ratnapura, his wife Suvrata and their pitiable plight for want of a son. One day Charana Muni predicts that they will soon be blessed with a son, who will be known as Lord Dharamanatha. A son is born whose ceremonies are performed by celestial beings. On attaining youth, Lord Dharmanatha proceeds to Vidarbha to attend the *svayamvara* of Indumati. In six lengthy cantos (11-16) the poet gives the conventional description of seasons etc. which interrupts the flow of the plot. The Lord, after marrying the princess, comes back and is crowned as king. After seeing *ulkapata* the Lord becomes detached, undergoes severe penances and attains *nirvana*.

This work may be regarded as the outcome of the poet's mature poetic faculties; it displays the richness of his poetic genius, the exuberance of his imagination and his profound knowledge of the human heart.

A few excerpts from the work are given below :

1

## Saintly Nature

Those people, who are pure and saintly by nature, do not get tainted by honours. They are like the crystal which reflects other colours but does not imbibe them. (1:21)

2

## Women's Beauty

The beautiful line of fine hair on the abdomen of the young lady, Queen Suvrata, had the appearance of a row of bees attracted by the fluid oozing out of an excited elephant's head broken by the god of love, diving in the pond of her deep navel. (11. 47)

The Creator, by creating the cheeks of this coquettish-eyed beautiful maiden, had, in fact, created two full moons, That is why, afterwards, he inflicted these scars of wounds to make them resemble the scars of the moon. (11:50)

When the goddesses of prosperity, love, fame and beauty had finished proclaiming the majesty of the queen, the silent creator gave a befitting reply to their proclamations by painting her eyebrows which have a sacred mark between them. (11:56)

That young maiden, Shringaravati, who surpassed even the celestial nymphs in beauty, was the cynosure of the eyes of all the kings looking at her with desire. She was like a snare for their deer-like eyes. She was the sacred power which kept the god of love alive. She appeared to be the kingdom of the god of love, She was the one and only personification of the fulfilment of all the people's desires. She was like a wave of sea, full of nectar-like charm. Her extraordinary beauty appeared to be the essence of the world. (XVII:12-13)

The beauty of this doe-eyed maiden was so faultless that one cannot describe it, Even the Creator was not able to duplicate this. Whatever resemblance there may be was created by chance only. (IX:35)

3

## A Love- Lorn Lady

She does not enjoy anything, nor does she smile;



she does not speak or sleep, nor does she eat anything.  
 She does not know what is happening. O lucky young man!  
 that lady with eyes devoid of all traces of smile  
 remembers only love-making. (XI:42)

Earlier she used to praise the nights during the day; while during the nights she would praise the day, because of the extra-ordinary nature of her ardour. But now that frail lady wants to stay in such a place only where there is neither day nor night. (XIV:70)

## 4

## Descent of Celestial Nymphs

From where have the stars appeared in the sky during the day? It cannot be lightning, because there are no clouds in the sky. Even fires cannot be lit without any fuel. So what is this glittering wonderful spectacle? (XV:2)

## 5

## Regal Valour

This sword of King Mahasena, which had drunk the blood from the heads of the elephants and which has been embraced tightly by warriors desirous of love-making, has thrown itself into the flames of fame for self-purification. (11:15)

When all the enemy kingdoms were forcibly swallowed by his sword, which was brighter than even the moon, then he donated all the bounty to the Brahmins after washing it in the flow of the striking sword. (11.:19)

## 6

## Laments of a Childless Father

Alas! the newly-grown tree of the youth of the doe-eyed lady has become fully blossomed, as if it had been watered with nectar. It provides joy to the eyes which were like birds who had been tormented by weariness because of wandering in this desert of materialistic world.

706/10

(11:68)

But we have not been able to beget any seasonal fruit such as a son from

this tree. That is why my heart continuously torments me, making me feel like a burden on the earth. (I1:69)

This beloved of mine has become fearful about the stability of her position for want of begetting any child and dries the paste of henna on her hands by emitting deep sighs. (XII: 72)

7

Filial Love

After placing the son in his own lap and embracing him, King Mahasena closed his eyes, as if after storing the pleasure in the house of his body he had locked both the doors securely. (IX:11)

8

Old Age

In earlier times, the body of a man was filled with the pond of attractiveness in which long curly hair looked like waves. But now that pond has been swept by the high tides of old age. (IV:58)

9

Mortal Nature of the World

This life is as short-lived as the drop of water on the lotus-leaf swayed by the winds. Then, why do human beings hanker after worldly pleasures which are as transitory as the waves of the sea. (XX:14)

10

Lunar Eclipse

Is this crystal drinking bowl being filled with the wine of the night? Or is the lotus growing in the celestial river being kissed by the flying groups of bees? Or is it some lotus tainted with mud which has slipped from the trunk of Airavata, the elephant of Indra? Or perhaps it is the reflection of my moustached face in the blue mirror of the sky?

After thinking in this manner for some time, the king concluded that it was nothing but the eclipse of the moon. (IV:42-44)

## 11

## Eulogy to Lord Dharmanatha

O Great Jina! your glory is so great that though you may be like the newly-waxing moon after the end of the waning fortnight, if the sun wants to emulate even a little bit of your brilliance—that will be a futile exercise.

From *Dharmasarmabhyudaya*, 12th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Liberation of Neminatha

## VAGBHATA

NEMINIRAVANA (Neminirvāṇa) is a *mahakavya* written by Vagbhata (Vāgbhaṭa, 1075-1125). It describes the life story of Neminatha, the 22nd Tirthankara in fifteen cantos. After the usual obeisance to the Tirthankaras, the poem deals with the description of King Samudravijaya of Dvaravati, Once he sees the celestial nymphs descending from heaven, who tell the king that Neminatha, the 22nd Tirthankara, will soon be born in his house. Accordingly his wife Shiva delivers a son whose sacred ceremonies are performed by the gods. The next 5 cantos (6-10) deal with impersonal descriptions, the amorous dalliance of romantic couples. Rajimati, the daughter of Ugrasena, falls in love with Lord Neminatha. The marriage is arranged. As Neminatha becomes detached from worldly pleasures after hearing the touching pathetic cries of the animals which were to be killed and served on the table on the festive occasion of his marriage, he at once denounces the world, undergoes penances and in the end attains liberation.

A few excerpts are given below :

## 1

## Eulogy to Lord Padmaprabha

He sits on the lotus throne. His eyes are like fully blossomed lotus. He has the beauty of red lotus and is the bearer of the sign of lotus. May Lord Padmaprabha shower his blessings of prosperity on us! His lotus-hand is always lifted in bestowing prosperity on everybody. (1:6)

## 2

## Eulogy to King Samudravijaya

He is the same brave king who drew out from the depth of the waters of

River Yamuna the enraged Kaliya serpent, whose face shone brilliantly because of the gems on his hood, in the manner of plucking a blue-lotus.

(1,76)

My home has become a center of pilgrimage because it has been sanctified by the dust from your feet. O honoured one, today I feel so gratified that I feel as if I have ascended the throne of Lord Indra.

(XI.39)

### 3

#### Eulogy to Neminatha

He bows before the lord who is like a sandbeach in the ocean of the god of love who has performed great penances, and who is like a boon-giving divine tree for the attainment of salvation by the ascetics.

(XV.33)

### 4

#### Regal Valour

The flame of King Samudravijaya's fame in vanquishing the families of his enemy-kings illuminates all directions, and, fanned by the breezes created by the swaying ears of the elephants guarding the quarters, burns glowingly.

(1.60)

### 5

#### A Love-lorn Lady

The sphere of the moon appears like a hard ball of fire to Rajimati. The garland of flowers has become as terrifying as a she-serpent. She has forsaken the bed of flowers and her whole attention is concentrated on thinking about him.

(XI.8)

She has become disinterested in all the white things after the white moonlight increased her agonies of separation from her beloved. She has now forsaken all white things like camphor, ivory ear-rings, pearl necklaces, and smiling too.

(XI.9)

Though she is very proficient in the art of music, when she wanted to sing, she could only produce a refrain because of her ardour and repeated the name of Neminatha like a parrot.

(XI.7)

### A Father's Feeling for the Daughter's Marriage

The mighty king became extremely happy with eyes full of tears of joy and looked like a peacock who had heard the rolling thunder of black clouds.

(XI.49)

From *Neminirvana*, 11th-12th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

### The Story of Lord Shiva

RAJANAKA JAYARATHA

**HARACHARITACHINTAMANI** (Haracaritacintāmani), by Rajanaka Jayaratha (Rajānaka Jayaratha, 13th century), is a poem in thirty-two cantos glorifying the greatness of Lord Shankara. In the different chapters of this book, the poet has narrated various legends about Shiva, his spouse Goddess Parvati, his sons Ganesha and Kartikeya, and of various places of pilgrimage dedicated to them throughout Kashmir.

In the ninth canto of the book, the story of the birth of Kartikeya and the subsequent slaughter of Tarakasura by him is told; while the thirteenth canto narrates how the gods conspired successfully to turn the three Tripura demons, who were staunch worshippers of Lord Shankara, into his detractors and thus cause their destruction at the hands of the Lord Himself.

#### 1

### Canto 9: The Slaying of Taraka

Long, long ago, the gods tormented by Taraka, the king of demons, made a representation to Lord Brahma, seated on a lotus, in this manner:

(3)

"O Lord! that demon, after receiving a boon from you, humiliates the gods every day in all possible manners.

(4)

"Being proud of the strength of his arms, that wicked enemy of the gods has taken away our Garuda, and made a plaything of it.

(5)

"All the demons make fun of Lord Indra, weeping with his thousand eyes, whenever they happen to see him.

(7)

"The all-devouring heat of the God of Fire has been cooled down by this demon with bouquets of flowers. (8)

"He also laughs every day at Yama, the God of Death, by asking how was Yama conquered by Taraka if he is capable of devouring everything when angry? (9)

"If the gods keep quiet, he says jeeringly that they have lost their tongues, and if they say something good, then he calls them chatter-boxes. (10)

"These gods, kissing the ground with bowed heads, consider their immortality a matter of shame till he occupies the throne. (12)

"I have only this to say that heaven has become like a desert under his rule". (13)

On being informed thus by the gods whom he could not see because of tears in his eyes, Lord Brahma opened his mouth, illuminating the whole of the sky with rays from his sparking teeth, spoke: (14)

"I know that this demon was tormenting the entire universe. But even today that person is not born who can vanquish him. (15)

"He performed severe penance with the object of conquering the whole universe and put a condition that he could be slain only by a seven-day-old boy. (16)

"There is no doubt that such a boy, who when seven days old will slay Taraka, will be born of Lord Shiva. (17)

"Whoever will be born of the union of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva, will fulfil your desire and destroy Taraka fearlessly". (18)

Being thus consoled by Lord Brahma, the gods bowed again and again before Him and left for their homes in a happy frame of mind. (22)

[The gods had to wait for many years during which the marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati was solemnized. Then after a long time.....]

A son was born to Goddess Parvati whose glow was equal to that of the sun and the moon. He bore fierce Shakti in his hands and the knot of his hair was decorated with flowers. (220)

As soon as he came out of the womb of Goddess Parvati, he was able to destroy the demons. This is why the child was named "Kumara" by Lord Shiva. (221)

Goddess Parvati entrusted him to six kritikas, From them he got six faces and the name of Kartikeya. (222)

He was born on the fifteenth day of the waning moon of the month of Chaitra. On seeing him, the gods were pleased. (223)

When that six-faced was six days old on the fifth day of the waxing moon of the month of Chaitra, Lord Shiva equipped him with all kinds of weapons. (224)

On the seventh day, all the gods led by Lord Indra and Upendra made his submission to him: (227)

"O you destroyer of demons! You are the son of even the god of gods. You are equal to him in valour. Be pleased to have mercy on us." (228)

Oh hearing this, Kartikeya spoke thus, spouting streams of nectar of fearlessness from his six mouths: (229)

"Make known your heart's desire and I will doubtlessly fulfil it". (230)

On thus being spoken to, the gods led by Lord Indra told him with bowed heads that the king of demons, Taraka, was giving them a lot of trouble and they wanted him to be vanquished. (231)

On hearing their request, he said, "So be it," and set out for vanquishing Taraka. (232)

On seeing the glorious form of Kumara, Taraka said: "So it is you who have been sent by gods to vanquish me. (246)

"Everyone talks about the irrational behaviour of children. That may be the reason why you, in your infancy, have set out to conquer me. " (248)

After hearing this speech, Kumara sitting on his peacock spoke with words harsh enough to eliminate fear from the minds of the gods: (249)

"Oh Taraka! you say that I am just a child, so I will play ball with your head by making it fall and rise quickly and forcefully. (250)

"When the valour is conspicuous, then what is the use of asking others about it. You have a misconception that I am just a child, and hence harmless; so listen to these words. (251)

"A baby python is to be feared. In the same way, the heat of the rising sun is intolerable, A hymn, though of few words, when invoked, can work wonders. (252)

"It is often seen that growing age results in the loss of strength of living beings. You can see that the trees grow weaker after a long time." (253)

While he was thus being spoken to by Kartikeya, the demon threw the weapon *mudgara*, at him, But Kartikeya destroyed that with his *chakra*. (255)

After breaking the *mudgara*, Kumara angrily threw a mace at him. On being hit by it, the demon trembled like a mountain being shaken by the tremor at the end of an aeon. (256)

When the mighty demons saw Tararaka shaking like this in the battle, they got very angry and threw destructive weapons at Kumara. (257)

Kumara was not frightened by the simultaneous attack of weapons. Instead that glorious god laughed uproariously again and again: (258)

"Taraka, stand still and use all your weapons now, because you, intoxicated as you are with your strength, are going to be slain by me very soon", (260)

Saying so, Kartikeya threw his Shakti at the king of demons, who was devoured by its flames like a tree hit by a flash of lightning. (261)

After destroying Taraka, the king of demons, Skanda, followed by Lord Indra and other gods singing his praises, headed for the abode of Lord Shiva to get his blessings. (262)

Seated on the top of the Mandara mountain and with Parvati by his side, Lord Shiva saw Skanda being felicitated by Lord Indra and other gods. (266)

Then there entered Skanda, all alone, in the assembly of Lord Shiva and respectfully bowed his head at the feet of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. (267)

After being told of the presence of Lord Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and other gods, Lord Shiva signalled to Nandi by the lifting of his eyebrow to allow them in. (268)

Thereafter, those gods touched the ground with their heads after entering and made a submission to Lord Shiva in this manner: (269)



**"You are the master of the whole of this universe and your son is the slayer of Taraka, After a long time now, all our troubles are over. (270)**

**"Taraka has been slain and we have received your blessings, So we have no unfulfilled desires left in our hearts. (271)**

**"Even then we have one request to make, that the remembrance of this joy of gods should purify devotees. (272)**

**"Whosoever among the devotees speaks or hears about the exploits of Skanda should attain salvation without any difficulty. (273)**

**"Whenever this is read, terrors should recede from there and there should never be any troubles like famines." (274)**

**Being thus exhorted by the gods, the merciful Lord Shiva looked at Skanda, the joy of the gods and said "So be it". (275)**

## 2

### Canto 13: The Blazing of the Three Cities

**Once upon a time, there used to be three indomitable demons of strange birth They were named Vidyunmali, Taraka and Kamala. (3)**

**Those three, with the ambition of conquering all the three worlds, undertook hard penance for many years. (4)**

**Lord Brahma, very pleased with their severe penance, appeared before them suddenly and spoke thus. (5)**

**"I am very happy with you, so you can ask for a boon. Now you have no further need to undertake penance as I will fulfil your wishes". (6)**

**Hearing these words of Lord Brahma, the demons were gratified and single-mindedly asked for this boon: (7)**

**"O Brahma! make us the master of all worlds. With your blessings, we should become invincible and immortal. " (8)**

**Being requested thus, Lord Brahma, in order to avoid the destruction of this world, tried to pacify them by speaking sweetly. (9)**

**"O mighty demons! who can grant such a boon to you? This physical form is subject to birth and death and it cannot be made immortal. (10)**

**"What you can do is to set down a condition for your death, I can bestow the rulership of all the worlds on you". (11)**

**After being told so by Lord Brahma, those demons conferred with their mentor and asked for this boon in lieu of their severe penance: (12)**

**"O Brahma! Grant us three beautiful cities in the three worlds. These cities should be full of wondrous objects, and be such that they can be moved at will and can acquire any form. (13)**

**"These three cities should meet for a moment after a thousand glorious years and then separate again and become as before. (14)**

**"O Brahma! during that moment of their meeting, when there are two Shankaras present in the world, if all the three of us are pierced by a single arrow, only then should we attain our end. Otherwise, our prosperity, knowledge, strength and life should go on increasing". (15-16)**

**This wish of theirs was granted to them by Lord Brahma. Those with strong determination can attain anything by doing penance. (17)**

**Seeing that the demons had been granted a boon, their mentor, Shukra, advised them thus, "I will talk to you about what you have not achieved as yet. (18)**

**"You have already undertaken hard penance and attained this prosperity. Now I shall tell you the ways of strengthening it. So listen carefully: (19)**

**"You should take the protection of Lord Shankara, whom even Brahma and other gods also worship (20)**

**"That most compassionate Shiva's favour can only be attained by devotion, and not by penance, knowledge or giving of alms. (21)**

**"Therefore, always worship Shivalinga devoutly, otherwise understand that your prosperity will vanish". (22)**

**Saying this again and again in various ways, Shukra showed them a Shivalinga and told them that he was also its devotee. (27)**

Those mighty demons and Maya accepted the words of their mentor respectfully and after bowing before the Shivalinga, spoke in this manner:  
(28)

"From today onwards, this god is our refuge. Even Brahma, Vishnu and other gods have to follow his wishes".  
(29)

From that day onwards, all of them started worshipping the Shivalinga and with their hearts, actions and speech were devoted to Lord Shiva.  
(37)

In this way, many years passed. The gods somehow got wind that the demons were ready to attack them. So all of them went to Lord Brahma.  
(38)

They informed him about the threat posed by the demons. Thereafter, led by him, they presented themselves before Lord Shiva.  
(39)

Lord Brahma and the gods tried to please him by singing his praises. Then they told him about the demons who were all set to attack the worlds.  
(40)

The Lord of Parvati divined their heartfelt desire for the destruction of the demons, and spoke thus smilingly:  
(42)

"How, when, where and whom could these demons have conquered, absorbed as they are in worshipping my Linga everyday?  
(43)

"You Vishnu, and you other gods have also achieved greatness because of worshipping my Linga.  
(44)

"Dedication to me has been the root cause of all wealth in this world. Whoever possesses that dedication can never be forsaken by me.  
(45)

"I can make the impossible possible and perform miracles, but he who worships my Linga devotedly can never be killed by any one".  
(51)

After Lord Shiva, the protector of his devotees, had spoken thus, Lord Brahma bowed and, with folded hands touching his forehead, said respectfully:  
(52)

"Nobody has the power to kill a devotee of your Linga. But when these demons become unfaithful, then be pleased to remember this."  
(53)

Thus spoken to by Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva said, "So be it". Then all the gods departed for their abodes.  
(54)

[Then the mentor of the gods, Brihaspati, hit upon a devious plan. He went to the city of demons disguised as Shukra, who had gone away to perform certain sacrifices, and started preaching to the demons that Lord Buddha was greater than Lord Shiva. Hence they should forsake Shiva in favour of Lord Buddha. After repeated exhortations, he was able to shake their faith and brainwash them into changing their loyalty.]

When he had accomplished this task, he went away happily and quickly to the city of Indra. From then onwards, those demons became disloyal to Lord Shiva. (127)

Later :

They could not even tolerate hearing the name of the Linga. so there could never be a question of their worshipping it. Now these demons started tormenting all worlds. (128)

Any beautiful thing, which took their fancy, was grabbed by them. All the agitated gods were made to flee by the mighty demons. (129)

The gods, led by Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu, went to the abode of Lord Shiva, and after praising him spoke thus with folded hands: (130)

“O God! Give us your protection’. They also informed him of the disloyalty of the demons. (131)

He started making playful preparations for the burning of the three cities. For this purpose, the earth became his chariot and the Vedas were his horses. (133)

Mount Meru became the flag and the moon and the sun the wheels. Mount Mandar became the mighty bow of Lord Shiva. (134)

Sheshanaga took the form of the string of the bow. Lord Brahma occupied the post of the charioteer, Lord Vishnu became the arrow and Marut, the god of wind, the bunch of feathers at the end of the arrow to give it speed. (135)

The intolerable fire took its place at the tip of the arrow. Then Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati mounted this chariot. (136)

He was surrounded on all sides by his sprites. He made Nandi mount a lion bearing his flag. (137)

In this way he created another Shankara blessed with miraculous powers. When Lord Shiva was all prepared in this way, the demons also reached there. (138)

[They started abusing Lord Shiva, despite protests by their mentor Shukra and Maya]

At that moment the three cities got together and Lord Shiva, seeing the right time, shot a flaming arrow with three tips. (189)

Being engulfed by the fire of the arrow, the three cities were burnt to ashes then and there. (190)

The three mighty demons, too, were burnt by the flaming arrows. They received the just consequences of abusing Lord Shiva in this life itself. (191)

"O God! you are the one who fulfils the wishes of everybody. We bow before you again and again. By your blessings, we have been freed from our troubles. (194)

"O Lord! You have great compassion for your servants. So we beg you to forsake this terrifying form and take on a gentle form. (195)

O Lover of your devotees! our eyes have been blinded by your glowing form. O Lord! make us happy by taking the gentle form." (196)

While the gods were making their submissions, Lord Shiva, of his own will, took on a form as gentle as hundreds of moons put together. (197)

On seeing the gentler form of Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma bowed before him out of devotion and submitted respectfully: (198)

"O Lord! for the good of the people, be pleased and stay here." (199)

Hearing his words Lord Shiva said, "So be it," and brought out a glorious Shivalinga appearing from the nether-region. (201)

Being requested further by Lord Brahma and other gods, the most compassionate lord granted this boon to them. (202)

"This will be the most holy of all places where all will attain salvation.

(203)

"Even if the sinful worms and insects breathe their last here, they also become free from their sins and attain *nirvana*".

(204)

That glorious Linga was worshipped first of all by Lord Brahma, the self-created God. That is why that place is renowned as Svayambhunatha, the abode of the master of Lord Brahma, in all the three worlds.

(207)

From that time, this holy place of Svayambhunatha is considered more sacred than even the city of Kashi and is praised in all the books.

(209)

From *Haracharitchintamani*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Story of Shri Krishna

### LILASHUKA

KRISHNAKARANAMRITA (Kṛṣṇakaraṇāmṛta) by Lilashuka (Lilasuka, 13th century) comprises romantic lyrics of remarkable devotional fervour Chaitanya picked up this poem from the South and made it an important source of devotional emotionalism for a Vaishnava devotee.

Not much authentic information is available regarding its author; who is variously known as Bilvamangala or Krishnalilashuka.

O Keshava, the brilliance of your moon-like face is unequalled and so is your appearance. Both your brilliance and your appearance are beyond description. Both of these can be found only in you. I can only bow before you again and again with folded hands.

(95)

O Lord! this worldly moon, after being humbled by your moon-face has broken itself into ten pieces and prostrates itself at your feet. In this way it is attaining greater glory. O Lord! your kindness knows no bounds.

(96)

O Lord! how can one compare your face with a lotus? Words fail to do justice to your beauty. Even the moon attains fullness only on the full-moon night: So what should I say? What else is there in all the three worlds which

can equal your beautiful face as you play on a flute? (97)

O Krishna! If you want to hear the reason, then listen attentively. Great poets of the past have not seen anything like this. Since time immemorial, this worldly moon has been like a prayer lamp, fit only for worshipping your moon-like face. (98)

O Lord! glory be to your beatific smile. Your smile, by the continuous flow of inner happiness, has humbled all the other *rasas*. This smile is also the source of the boundless sea of nectar. (99)

There may well be a few thousands who have attained mastery in the appreciation of arts. There may also be another few thousands who have taken the vow of excellence in extra-ordinary virtues. O Lord! we don't want to dispute this, nor are we trying to flatter you. We will speak only the truth and that is, beauty has achieved its utmost expression in you. (100)

O master! though poetic expressions of people like me spread sweetness, the fulfilment of their lives lies only in you. The fun-loving, not unduly shy maidens of the cowherd tribe, who have been made humble by love, also find the fulfilment of their lives in your feet and so does the expression of extra-ordinary sweetness in you. (101)

O Lord! the whole of this universe is your abode. Lakshmi is your beloved Indra and the other gods are there to serve you. Even then this incarnation of yours is without parallel. (102)

May Lord Krishna live for ever! This manifestation of His has been nourished by the love-games of the maidens of Vrajabhumi and is like a crocodile-shaped *kasturi* mark of good fortune on the forehead of all the three worlds. (103)

No other god but Shri Krishna is my favourite deity. He has given me love. He has given me desire. He has given me knowledge. He has given me prosperity. He has given me life and he is the source of my life also. (104)

May our literary expression grow in sweetness in describing the wealth of your beauty! And may our thinking also grow in playfulness describing your childhood! (105)

In talking about your life-story, the exalted souls have savoured the nectar on their tongues. Then there are playful deeds of your childhood when you tried to hold Radha back and would not let her go. Then again there are your antics which were inspired by the songs of your flute which adorns your lotus-face. O Lord! may all these exploits flow in a never-ending stream in my heart! (106)

O Lord! if we are lucky, we develop unshakable devotion in you. After this, the image of your divine childhood is etched forever in our minds. Then salvation itself serves us with folded hands and *dharmā*, *artha* and *kamā* wait at our pleasure. (107)

Victory be to God! Your name is divine and it brings happiness in all the three worlds. Glory be to Lord Krishna! He is nectar personified for the ear, the mind and the eye. (108)

O Lord! I salute you, you are the divine light itself. This light burns bright in the consciousness of those noble souls whose hearts are filled with restlessness born out of overwhelming emotions created by the showers of excess of joy. This light also adorns the prosperous city of Gokula. This light is like an ocean of sweetness and it is beyond the analytical powers of mind as well as speech. (109)

O Lord Krishna! May this, your *Kamamrita* written by Lilashuka flow like a stream of nectar till eternity. The feet of Ishandeva have been the ornaments for Lilashuka. And the mainspring of his life has been the bouquets of never-diminishing fame of Shri Krishna who has been captivated by the wealth of love. (110)

How fortunate is this for me that my word-play has become like nectar to the ears of Lord Krishna, who is lost in the mind and eyes of the beautiful maidens of Vrindavana. There are holy men who practise the art of slow and melodious speech. This *Kamamrita* has been entering the ears of those holy men again and again and showering nectar unto them. (111)

O Lord! wherever my eyes fall, there your magnificence should come to life. And may your exalted highness always remember me with eyes which have been widened with kindness and are filled with nectar from the notes of your flute!



## The Story of Shrirama

JAYADEVA II

JAYADEVA (13th century), the author of *Prasannaraghavam* (Prasannarāghavam), is different from the celebrated author of *Gitagovindam*. For the excellence of his poetic composition he received the sobriquet *Piyusha Varsha*. Among his other works are *Sitavihara*, *Nilakanthavijayachampu*, *Shivalilarnava*, *Gangavatarana* and *Chandraloka*. Apart from being a poet and playwright, he was an eminent exponent of philosophy conforming to the Shaktivishistadvaita of Shrikantha.

*Prasannaraghavam* is a play of seven acts and tells the story of Rama starting with Sita's *svayamvara* and ending with the annihilation of Ravana and return of Rama from exile to Ayodhya. The playwright's main emphasis is on the wedding of Rama and the events leading and subsequent to it, and the war between Rama and Ravana.

The first four acts of the play are devoted to Sita's *svayamvara*. In the fifth act, the playwright has adopted a novel method of conveying the passage of so many events by introducing a conversation among various rivers, on the banks of which different incidents occurred, and the sea. The last and final act of the play give a running commentary on the war between Ravana's and Rama's forces seen through the eyes of a *Vidyadhara*.

### Act One

ENTERS DALBHYAYANA

DALBHYAYANA : It is true that giving away one's daughter in marriage to a worthy man causes greater pleasure than spiritual knowledge and material prosperity combined can. That's why King Janaka is also anxious to find a suitable husband for his daughter Sita. But what is this noise, like the buzzing of bees ? (*Looks up*) There really dare two bees and by the grace of my preceptor, Sage Yajnavalkya, I can even understand their language. They are saying that both Banasura and Ravana are coming for the *svayamvara* of Sita. This news is really alarming. Let me go and inform my mentor about this. (*Exits*)

(*Off-Stage*)

Sir, we are two court-balladists who have been commanded by the king to sing praises of the kings assembled here.

(*Enter two court-balladists*)

**NUPURAKA :** Many great kings from different parts of the land are present here; they add to the glory of the assembly by their fine dressēs and beautiful ornaments. All of them are waiting for their turn to lift the bow of Lord Shiva.

**MANJIRAKA :** Among these kings, you can see the great kings of Matsya, Kashmir, Kanchi and Sindhudesa.

*(Goes round and announces loudly)*

Here ye, O great kings ! whosoever among you is able to draw the string of Lord Shiva's bow to his ear will be Sita's chosen husband. (Then with wonder) Friend, look here, all the kings have started together for the bow. Their sparkling ornaments produce sweet noises. But none of them has been able to move the bow from its place. Now they are coming back with bowed heads.

**NUPURAKA :** Alas ! their initial enthusiasm was short-lived.

**MANJIRAKA :** The kings from other lands also have come to try their luck. But it seems that this earth is bereft of all brave men.

*(Off-Stage)*

Who is this liar calling this earth bereft of brave men ?

*(Enters a man)*

**THE MAN :** It is really child's play for me. With the drawing of the string, I will also draw the heart of Sita towards me. (Tries to move the bow but fails). Oh, it does not even move. This bow is proving to be difficult. I'll have to take Sita by force.

**MANJIRAKA :** Do not be rash. For that, you will have to contend with the combined forces of all the kings assembled here.

**THE MAN :** Oh, even these worm-like men have some insolence. I will terrify them by showing my real form. (Goes out arrogantly and comes back as Ravana).

I, single-handedly, can fight all the kings and win.

**BANASURA :** It is really surprising that none among the brave kings has been able to lift the bow. I will lift this bow like a flower and provide good exercise for my arms.

**RAVANA :** Bring Sita here immediately or I will have to use my sword.

**BANASURA :** If you are really brave, then why do you not lift the bow ?

**RAVANA :** Why should I waste my energy on a bow ?

**BANASURA :** That is no excuse for your impotence.

**RAVANA :** Why do you not try your hand at the bow ?

**BANASURA** : I am not interested in marrying Sita. But I shall try this to test the strenght of my arm-muscles.

**MANJIRAKA** : Look here, friend, Banasura also has been unable to move the bow from its place.

**RAVANA** : Well, your arms have been as powerless as a haystack.

**BANASURA** : I shall over-power you with my arms.

**RAVANA** : And I shall burn your arms to ashes.

**NUPURAKA** : O Banasura and Ravana, are you not ashamed of blowing your own trumpets ?

(All exit)

## Act Two

*(Enter Rama and Lakshmana)*

**RAMA** : My dear Lakshaman, look at the beauty of this garden. Spring is here. Bees are buzzing. A gentle breeze is blowing and the flowers are in full bloom. Let us pluck some flowers for the evening prayer of sage Vishvamitra.

**LAKSHMANA** : As you wish. *(Plucks flowers)*

**RAMA** : *(Looking around)* Hey, here is a temple of Chandika. I bow before you, O merciful, compassionate beloved of Lord Shiva. *(Looking to the other side)* Oh, I can hear the sweet tinkle of the anklet-bells of some beautiful maiden coming here.

*(Off-Stage)*

*[Mistress, this way please]*

**RAMA** : Is it the Princess ? Let me see who this jewel among women is, whose complexion is like pure gold, and whose beauty is like the flame of the god of love.

*(Enters Sita with her friend)*

**FRIEND** : Here is the temple of Chandika.

**SITA** : I bow before thee again and again, O wife of Shiva!

**FRIEND** : O beloved of Shiva, my friend is as beautiful as the moon; may she quickly acquire a husband worthy of herself. Please, fulfil my desire immediately so that my friend should not grieve.

**SITA** : I am not grieving.

**LAKSHMANA** : O Princess, do not grieve. Your beloved is hidden behind this mango tree.

SITA : Oh, whose sweet voice is this? This innocent young man of golden complexion, adorned with a peacock feather and ear-rings, fills my heart with motherly affection. I think he will be suitable for my younger sister, Urmila.

FRIEND : O Prince, who are you and why are you roaming around all alone in this unknown garden?

LAKSHMANA : Stupid, I have my elder brother with me. Still you are considering me alone !

FRIEND : Then my wish is going to be fulfilled.

SITA : Friend, I have to see that mango tree which, following my mother's desires, is to be united with the *vasanti* creeper.

RAMA : (*Joyfully*) Oh, she is coming this way making me happy. Her eyes are like blue lotuses, her face is like the full moon and her tresses are like darkness itself.

FRIEND : Here is the creeper going forward to embrace the mango tree

SITA : (*Looking at Rama*) Who is this handsome, dark, young man, wearing a peacock-feather and giving happiness to my eyes ?

*(Enters a maid)*

MAID : Princess, your mothers want to adorn you with ornaments. So let us go. (*Exit the ladies.*)

RAMA : Has my beloved gone away ? I wish I could see her again.

LAKSHMANA : Brother, the sky is getting redder in the west and the moon is rising in the east.

RAMA : Then let us go and make Sage Vishvamitra happy by giving him those flowers for his evening prayers.

(Exit)

### Act Three

*(Enters Vishvamitra followed by Rama and Lakshmana)*

VISHVAMITRA : This is Janaka's capital city decorated for our welcome.

*(Enters King Janaka)*

JANAKA : I bow before you, holy Sir.

VISHVAMITRA : May all your desires be fulfilled, O great king.

JANAKA : I am much obliged.

VISHVAMITRA : Is Sita, the daughter of goddess Earth, still with you ?

JANAKA : Yes, but now with your blessings, I will be able to get a suitable husband for her. (*Looking at Rama*) Who is this handsome, dark prince?

VISHVAMITRA : They are Rama and Lakshmana.

JANAKA : Oh, their names are like nectar in my ears. Are both of them brothers ?

VISHVAMITRA : Yes, they are the sons of King Dasharatha who is famed for his bravery in all directions.

JANAKA : Oh, both these princes are the sons of Dasharatha who is a jewel in the crown of the descendants of the sun-god.

VISHVAMITRA : He has also got two more sons, namely Bharata and Shatrughna.

JANAKA : Dasharatha is very fortunate in having such sons.

VISHVAMITRA : There can be no doubt about this. Dasharatha is the father of moon-like Rama and you are the progenitor of lily-like Sita. I want to see the bow of Shiva. So, please, order your men to fetch it. Or why not ask Rama to bring it ?

JANAKA : (*With surprise*) Learned one, why are you talking like an innocent? Even the mighty King Ravana was unable to move it.

VISHVAMITRA : That is immaterial. Rama was able to protect our sacrificial fires by exterminating the *rakshasas* like Tataka and Subahu. That is why I command Rama to string the bow of Lord Shiva and fulfil our desires.

JANAKA : (*To himself*) I pray to God that the sage's hope is fulfilled. (*To Rama*) Son, obey your mentor.

VISHVAMITRA : Dear Rama, fulfil our desire in the presence of all the assembled kings.

JANAKA : Shatananda, you should accompany Rama and ask kanchuki to bring Sita, with the lotus garland in her hands, to the pavilion.

SHATANANDA : As you command. (*Goes out*)

(*Enter Kanchuki, Sita and Shatananda*)

KANCHUKI : Victory be to the king ! Your orders have been obeyed.

VISHVAMITRA : (*Looking up*) Oh, Rama has raised the bow of Shiva like the banner of his fame. The sound of its string is filling all directions.

JANAKA : Oh, not only the directions, but my wishes have also been fulfilled by this sweet, loud sound. Now we should request Vishvamitra to perform the marriage ceremony of Rama and Sita.

SHATANANDA : You should also request him to perform for the marriage of Urmila with Lakshmana.

VISHVAMITRA : (*Smiling*) As you wish, but my son Rama wishes that all his brothers should marry the daughters of Janaka.

JANAKA : (*Joyfully*) Mandavi and Srutakirti with Bharata and Shatrughna ?

VISHVAMITRA : What else ?

JANAKA : I accept your command. Let us now prepare for the ceremonies.

(*Exit*)

## Act Four

*(Enters Jamadagnya)*

JAMADAGNYA : Oh, it is really the height of arrogance on Janaka's part that he took a vow about the marriage of his daughter with one who would be able to string the bow of Lord Shiva. This axe of mine, which has tasted the blood of many kings and has been the cause of death of Kartavirya, who had defeated even Ravana, will rid this earth of the presence of Janaka.

*(Enters Tandyayana)*

TANDYAYANA : My salutations, learned Sir.

JAMADAGNYA : May you enjoy long life ! What is the latest news ?

TANDYAYANA : The bow of Shiva has been broken by Rama, thus fulfilling the vow of Janaka.

JAMADAGNYA : Then the dynasty of Raghu is going to vanish from this earth.

TANDYAYANA : The sage is angry. I should report all this to my mentor, Shatananda.

*(Exit)*

*(Enter Rama and Lakshmana)*

JAMADAGNYA : I think this young man, having the auspicious marks of a newly married one, is Rama. But he is so handsome that he should have been named Kama.

LAKSHMANA : Here is a sage holding an axe in one hand and begging bowl in the other. He is a strange mixture of a Brahmin and a Kshatriya.

RAMA : My dear, he is Jamadagnya, conqueror of Kartikeya and slayer of Kartavirya. But he does not boast about his exploits. *(To Jamadagnya with folded hands)* I, with my younger brother, bow before you, O you jewel among the descendents of Bhrigu.

JAMADAGNYA : May you always be victorious !

RAMA : I am much obliged, Sir.

JAMADAGNYA : *(To himself)* I should not be unduly angry with this young man and make Sita a widow. But how can I quench the thirst of my axe which did not hesitate before falling on the neck of even my mother, Renuka. *(Angrily)* My blessings were just a matter of courtesy, Rama.

RAMA : May I know the reason of your ire, Sir ?

JAMADAGNYA : You have broken the bow of Shiva.

RAMA : As soon as I touched the bow, it broke by itself. That is not my fault.

JAMADAGNYA : Then be prepared for a fight.

RAMA : But how can I fight with a Brahmin ?

JAMADAGNYA : Do not be proud of your race. Let us decide right now which race is braver. I have already slain many great kings and my axe knows no mercy.

LAKSHMANA : It is true, learned Sir, that you did not show mercy even to your own mother.

JAMADAGNYA : You have stoked the fire of my anger by your utterings.

RAMA : Please, Sir, do not pay attention to his childish utterances. Whatever you have to say, say to me.

JAMADAGNYA : By breaking an old, dilapidated bow of Shiva, you think that you are the greatest warrior on earth. If you are really strong, then lift this bow of mine which has been given to me by Lord Narayana himself.

LAKSHMANA : (*Joyfully*) Brother Rama has taken the bow from the sage and is shooting an arrow from the great bow as if in play.

JAMADAGNYA : (*To himself*) Who can this handsome, dark-complexioned boy be ! Has the creator been born as a human being? (*To Rama*) Come here, son, do not feel shy. You have humbled my pride.

RAMA : Please forgive my insolence. I bow before you.

JAMADAGNYA : O you, shelter of all blessings, may your glory live forever ! I take my leave now.

(All exit)

## Act Five

(*Enter the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarayu. Sarayu is very agitated*)

SARAYU : My salutations, sacred ones !

GANGA AND YAMUNA : May things always be good to you, friend !

GANGA : Friend, may we know the cause of your agitation ?

SARAYU : The tears falling from the eyes of the women of Ayodhya have moved my heart. King Dasharatha is no more.

GANGA : Then we should go to Rama and find consolation under his protection.

SARAYU : But Rama is not here.

GANGA : What do you say ? Tell everything in detail.

SARAYU : It is a long story. The old king wanted to install Rama as the crown-prince. Thinking this the right moment, Kaikeyi asked for two boons—one that Rama should go to the forest and second that Bharata should be

consecrated as the crownprince. When Rama came to know of this, after touching his father's feet, he departed for the forest. Sita and Lakshmana also accompanied him. The old king could not bear this and died. When Bharata came to know of this, he was very much grieved at the turn of events.

YAMUNA : What happened afterwards ?

SARAYU : I have sent a swan to find out the rest.

*(Enters a swan)*

SWAN : My salutaions, blessed ones !

ALL THE THREE : O swan, may you prosper !

GANGA : Tell us about our children.

SWAN : After asking the grieving citizens to go back, Rama, followed by Sita and Lakshmana, entered the forest. Though the sun was hot and the land uneven, the three of them did not feel any discomfort because of their love for one another. After Ayodhya, they passed through Uttarakosala and then crossing the river Narmada, they reached the banks of Godavari.

YAMUNA : *(Fearfully)* But that is the habitat of Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana.

SWAN : *(Smiling)* Lakshmana has cut off her nose with his arrow and the rakshasa-gang has been destroyed by Rama. The holy men were very happy and blessed them. But after a few days, Sita was attracted by a golden deer. Rama went away to get that deer for her. She dispatched Lakshmana to help Rama in the hunt. Meanwhile she was kidnapped by a beggar. Beyond this I know nothing. I am tired. I want to go.

*(Exits)*

*(Enters Sagara with Godavari)*

SARAYU : They are also talking about the same topic.

SAGARA : What happened after that ?

GODAVARI : Wounded by Rama's arrow, the golden deer became a rakshasa named Maricha and the beggar also, after some time, came out of his guise as Ravana and took away Sita who was crying loudly. The king of the birds, Jatayu, heard her cries and tried to stop Ravana, but was wounded fatally by Ravana's sword.

In this fight Sita's anklet fell down on the ground. And I have heard the goddess of the forest say that it has been taken to Rishyamuka mountain by some monkey. Perturbed by Sita's separation, Rama has also left for the same mountain with Lakshmana.



*(Off-stage)*

*There is some happy news for Yamuna*

*(Enters Tungabhadra)*

TUNGABHADRA : Victory to the master of rivers !

SAGARA : So what is the happy news ?

TUNGABHADRA : Yamuna's brother Sugriva has been crowned as the king of monkeys by Rama after slaying Bali. The grateful Sugriva has ordered his commanders, namely, Hanuman, Nala, Nila, Angada, etc. to go out in all directions in search of Sita.

SAGARA : This news has given us new life. All of us love Rama and Sita very much and so wish them all happiness.

*(All exit)*

## Act Six

*(Rama and Lakshmana are roaming in the forest in search of Sita. Rama's grief is unbearable. In the meantime, a magician is exhibiting his powers by showing the happenings in Lanka to his friend; also Rama and Lakshmana, hidden behind the trees, witness these.)*

RAMA : I can hear the sweet voice of my beloved. Where is she ?

*(Enters Janaki)*

RAMA : Here she is. I want to go to her.

LAKSHMANA : *(Holding Rama by hand)* Do not be impatient, brother. This is all magic.

RAMA : How pale she looks ! It seems she has been crying. Why does goddess Earth not take pity upon her daughter ?

*(Enters Trijata)*

TRIJATA : Janaki, take heart.

SITA : Oh, it is my friend Trijata. I have just seen my lord in my dream but I cannot understand why my master is neglecting me. Perhaps he does not know what is happening here.

RAMA : Beloved, you are absolutely right.

*(Off-stage)*

O ye citizens of Lanka, beware. An extremely powerful monkey of monstrous size has entered the city by crossing the ramparts, and Aksha, the son of Ravana, has gone to subjugate him.

SITA : This whole Ashoka garden is being rocked.

TRIJATA : It seems that shameless wretch, Ravana, is coming here to make you accede to his proposal.

*(Enters Ravana)*

RAVANA : Janaki, oblige me by looking at me. I bow my proud head before you and seek your love. My heart is being tormented and begs for your love. My heart is being tormented and begs for your embrace.

SITA : How can my ears listen to such words?

RAVANA : Beautiful maiden, for your sake, I will leave Mandodari and make you the empress of this empire. I will also offer you my heads, if it pleases you.

SITA : How can you please me ? You are like a firefly before the sun-like Rama.

RAVANA : *(Angrily)* You are surely going to die if you do not listen to me. Give me something to be filled with the blood from her neck. *(Spreads out his hand between the branches of Ashoka tree.)* Oh, somebody has placed the decapitated head of son Aksha on my hand. It appears to be the handiwork of that monkey. First let me go and finish him.

*(Exits)*

SITA : O Ashoka tree, please provide me with some sparks of fire. *(Looking up)* Oh, a small ember has fallen from the tree but it is cold. *(Looking at it closely)* Is it the same ring which used to adorn the finger of Rama?

*(Enters Hanuman)*

SITA : Who are you ?

HANUMAN : Do not fear, madam. I am Hanuman, the servant of Sugriva, the messenger of Lord Rama and the son of Pavana. It was I who placed the head of Aksha on the palm of Ravana.

SITA : Tell me, does my lord remember me ?

HANUMAN : In your separation, Rama is getting thinner everyday like the waning moon. He has asked me to tell you that now all the pleasant things torment him and that his heart is always with you. He has asked you not to grieve; soon you will hear from him again.

SITA : Please tell my master that my eyes are thirsting for a glimpse of his. *(Gives the jewel from her hair to Hanuman)* Please take this to my lord.

HANUMAN : My assignment is over. I bow before you and take leave of you.

SITA : May you easily cross this sea of wicked rakshasas !

*(Exits Hanuman)*

*(Off-stage)*

O mean monkey, after killing Prince Aksha somehow, where have you hidden yourself? By the orders of Ravana, Meghanada wants to finish off you. *(After some time)* The brave monkey has been captured by Meghanada and his tail has been set fire to. The monkey has started jumping from one high building to another, thus spreading the fire everywhere. Now, he jumps into the sea to put out the fire of his limbs and go across.

RAMA : My dear, we have heard and seen all. So let us go now to welcome Hanuman.

*(Exeunt all)*

## Act Seven

*(Enter Karalaka and a hermit)*

KARALAKA : My salutations, O holy one!

HERMIT : My blessings on you ! Can you show me the way to Vibhishana's house ?

KARALAKA : Vibhishana is not in Lanka at present.

HERMIT : What happened ?

KARALAKA : Once Vibhishana respectfully submitted before Ravana that a king of his stature should not mar his reputation by pining for the wives of other men. Ravana got very angry and kicked him on the chest. Vibhishana felt humiliated and that very day departed from Lanka with some of his followers.

*(Exit both)*

*(Enter Ravana and Mandodari)*

RAVANA : Beloved, what can be the cause of your anxiety ? If you are worried about this war with the monkeys, then your fears are unfounded. My *rakshasas* are itching to destroy the monkey-force and attain victory. The great warriors like Meghanada and Kumbhakarna are also on the battle-field.

*(Off-stage)*

[The brave warriors Kumbhakarna and Meghanada have been burnt to ashes by the fire of the arrows of the sons of Dasharatha.]

*(Mandodari and Ravana faint)*

RAVANA : *(Recovering)* Beloved, have courage.

MANDODARI : *(Opening her eyes)* My lord, save me. I am drowning in the darkness of grief.

RAVANA : Do not be agitated. Now I will go myself and use my sword there.  
*(Exits)*

MANDODARI : I am also going to offer prayers to my family deities for the victory of my husband.

*(Exits)*

*(Enter Vidyadhara and Vidyadhari)*

VIDYADHARA : Ravana is going to fight the monkeys. Vibhishana is also there on the battle-field. Ravana has hurled a weapon at Vibhishana but Lakshmana has intervened and taken that on his chest. He has fainted. Rama is shooting arrows at Ravana to drive him away and at the same time crying bitterly on seeing Lakshmana's conditions. Ravana has been driven away by Rama's arrows. Sugriva is consoling Rama, but Rama is inconsolable.

VIDYADHARI : Alas ! it seems as if a sea of grief is overflowing.

VIDYADHARA : Look there. Hanuman is bringing a whole mountain of fragrant herbs to save him; Lakshmana has opened his eyes.

VIDYADHARI : Ravana is returning to resume to fight.

VIDYADHARA : Beloved, watch attentively. This war between Rama and Ravana is going to decide who is greater. You cannot under-estimate Ravana. He has conquered even the gods. He can lift Mount Kailasa playfully and he is a worshipper of Lord Shiva. So both of them are engaged in a bitter fight. Rama is looking somewhat angry. *(Joyfully)* Oh, Rama has slain Ravana and Ravana's head is now lying in the dust.

VIDYADHARI : Then presently Sita will be united with Rama.

*(Both exit)*

*(Enter Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana)*

RAMA : It seems the sun is setting in the west and darkness is spreading.

VIBHISHANA : The moon is appearing on the other side.

RAMA : *(Looking at Sita)* This moon though beautiful can never match the beauty of your face, my slender beloved. Look here, the rays of the moon are filling this world with an indescribable glow. Certainly this moon is born from the eye of the god of love, pleased after drinking the nectar from the lower lip of his spouse, Rati.

SITA : Lakshmana, can you tell me where Hanuman is ?

LAKSHMANA : Respected one, brother Rama has sent him to Ayodhya to give the good news of our arrival to Bharata.

SITA : Then what are we waiting for ?

VIBHISHANA : Here is the famous air-chariot Pushpaka at your service.

*(All of them get aboard Pushpaka)*

LAKSHMANA : Though we have come far in this carriage, we do not feel tired.

RAMA : You are right. After crossing the sea, the Dandaka forest, and the rivers, Narmada and Yamuna, we are flying over the Chitrakuta Mountain. The sun is also rising in the east. Even the Ganga is not far now. Sarayu is also close by. And on its banks you can see Ayodhya, the jewel among cities. So let us now alight from the Pushpaka after offering our prayers to the sun-god and show ourselves to our preceptors and near and dear ones.

*(All exit)*

*Prasannaraghavam*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Selections

### AMARACHANDRASURI

#### I

### PADMANANDA

PADMANANDA (Padmānanda) is a *mahakavya* written by Amarachandrasuri (Amaracandraśuri, 13th century). In nineteen cantos it describes the life-stories of Rishabhadeve, the first Tirthankara. It has been written in Pauranika style and describes the twelve lives of the Tirthankara.

A few excerpts from the work are given below :

#### 1

### The Philosophy of Detachment

As a traveller drinks water from the drinking places on his way, but his thirst is never entirely quenched, in the same way, this human being is never fully satisfied even after enjoying the material comforts in each lifecycle again and again. (II:90)

## 2

## The Importance of Dharma

A pond looks beautiful when it is full of water. Power is only meaningful when it is backed by prosperity. An army is strong only when it is led by a good commander. A body has value only when there is life in it. Clouds look beautiful only with rainfall. Only that place is beautiful where the gods are worshipped. A poem becomes pleasing when it possesses lyrical quality. In the same way, a human being can look beautiful, only when he has love for all and follows good conduct. (XIV : 96)

## 3

## The Divine Splendour of Vrishabhadhvija

The face of this magnificent master of newly-blossomed youth possesses the beauty of a pleasure garden, because his lips look like ripe fruits, his smile is like flowers and his eyebrows are like creepers. (VIII : 12)

## 4

## Royal Rage

On seeing that arrow falling like a shooting star in his court, the king of Magadha grew very angry. With his eyebrows shooting up on his angry forehead, he looked like the personification of ferocious anger. He sprang to his feet as if some enemy had challenged him and with trembling lips, spoke angrily, "Who is this arrogant fellow who has put a stick in the mouth of a lion which was sleeping peacefully in the forest? Who is this fool who wants to put his foot into the the forest being burnt by flames on all sides. I am prepared to put an end to his madness in the same way as a lion puts an end to the excited elephant." (XV : 171-173)

## 5

## Material Pleasure

Fisher-man lures fish by dangling baits of pieces of flesh. A hunter entices deer with music; sheep are lured by the shepherd with the help of grass. A cruel man hypnotizes other people with sweet talk. A fool tortures an ailing person by giving him bad medicines, while a confused person gives

bad advice to those people who cannot see rationally. In the same way, this worldly attachment causes untold sufferings to human beings by luring them with material objects which are pleasant in the beginning but have terrible consequences. (III : 40-41)

## 6

## Eulogy to Lord Vrishabhadhvaja

O master of the world, my tongue never tries of singing your praises. My ears are also fond of hearing about your innumerable qualities. My eyes just want to look at your face. Your feet are ornaments for my head. My heart is blessed because it is concentrated on you. Now my only wish is that my soul should also become one with you. (XIV : 80)

## 7

## A City

This city of Gandhasamrdhaka glitters like a brilliant blue gem. It is like the star-studded sky of the milky way.

It can be compared to the growth of aquatic plants in a foaming white ocean. (III : 21)

## 8

## Sufferings in Hell

At some places, the demons are grabbing some persons by their hands and feet and battering them on hard stoneslabs like washermen washing dirty clothes.' Some other persons are being sawn like pine trees with terrifying saws, while elsewhere some others are being ground in strange oil-extraction machines. (IV : 166-167)

## 9

## The Theory of Karma and Rebirth

ॐ नमः

O daughter, on the stage of this world, this soul appears in many different roles because of the consequences of his deeds. A fool can become a scholar, while a great scholar can be transformed into the king

of fools. A poor man becomes rich, while the rich man becomes a pauper. A suffering person can become a happy one in the next life and vice-versa. A woman can become a man and a man can become a woman. A king can be born somewhere else as a slave, while a slave can become a monarch.  
(V : 49-50)

10

The Arrival of Spring

Spring has arrived. The goddess of the forest looks full of desire because of new leaves. Bees are like her coquettish glances and blossoming flowers are like her smiles.  
(VII : 16)

11

Filial Love

Embracing his son to his heart, the father experienced such joy because of his love, as if he had attained godhead. It is doubtful whether any ascetic had ever experienced such joy even after having become one with Him.  
(VIII : 14)

12

Childhood Pranks

This master of the universe, Lord Vrishabhadhvaja, gave joy to all the sensory organs of his parents. With his childishly lisping words, he gave pleasure to their ears. His toothless smile was a source of joy for the eyes. By putting his petal-like fingers in them he provided joy to their mouths while his fragrant breath pleased their sense of smell. And when he rolled over their chests, he gave them limitless joy.  
(VIII : 24-25)

13

Feminine Beauty

That most beautiful maiden Sunanda bore three lines of creation, preservation and destruction on her neck. It appears that on seeing that neck, the conch-shell became twisted with pangs of jealousy.  
(VIII : 159)



## 14

## The Beauty of Spring

It appears that spring has created an ornamental waist-belt of golden tinkling bells for the goddess of the forest with these blossoming *champak*, *koraka* and *kaitava* flowers which are abuzz with bees humming around them. (XI : 4)

That freshly blossomed, trembling *madhavi* creeper, abuzz with bees humming around it, as if saying 'nay, nay' to her love out of modesty, is embraced stealthily by the fragrant breeze from the Malaya mountain like an enamoured beloved being embraced by her young lover. (XIII : 10)

## 15

## Rainy Season

Alas, during the bad times of rainy season, when the rising clouds have swallowed the sun and the moon, the skies are full of fireflies. It is true that in the absence of great men, lesser beings become the light-bearers. (XI : 34)

## 16

## Grandmother's Anxiety

Earlier there used to be a beautiful umbrella which protected the moon-like head of my son from the heat. Now there is that fiercely burning sun looking like a flaming forest-fire glowing mercilessly over it. (XIV : 118)

That son of mine is being dried up on all sides by the fierce rays of the summer sun like a pond whose lotuses have all dried up. (XIV : 126)

## 17

## An Emancipated Person

A man who has attained salvation is not troubled by old age, mental or physical sufferings, worries or fears. Then his soul is freed from the cycle of death or rebirth. (XIV : 203)

18

## Progression of Bharata

The chariots could move smoothly on the paths created by the filling up of the rivers with the dust raised by the foot-falls of horses, and then levelled by the footfalls of the elephants. (XVII : 117)

19

## Saintly Valour

There is no valour in hunting deer without first conquering the desires of love. If the violent winds cannot move the mountains, then their strength in blowing grass is useless. If a man cannot conquer greed, his greed creates enemy, then his renunciation of other vices is meaningless. And if he has not vanquished Bahubali with the strength of his arms, then his victory over the quarters of gods is worthless. (XVII : 15-16)

From *Padmananda*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

II

## Karna to Kunti

Another important work of Amarachandrasuri is *Balabharata* (Bālabhārata). It is an abridgment of Mahabharata.

The following passage is from the Udyoga Parva of *Balabharata*.

Now, the ruler of Angadesha spoke in this manner: "Mother, I have taken a vow to finish Arjuna. Hence except Arjuna, I can vouchsafe the deliverance from fear to four of your terrified sons. (V.40)

It does not behove me to forsake the vow taken before the assembly of kings in the battlefield. But, Mother, you have no cause for fear because this Arjuna is not going to be destroyed by me. (V.41)

Long ago, when I was learning the use of weapons, I, being, envious of Arjuna, begged my mentor, Dronacharya, respectfully that I should be taught the use of the Brahmastra. (V.42)

Because of his partiality for Arjuna, the Guru threw me out of his place by saying that this knowledge cannot be imparted to a person whose family name is unknown. From there I went to Sage Parashurama's abode. (V.43)

I knew that Parashurama was a sworn enemy of the kshatriyas, the warrior clan. But he could impart to me the knowledge about the greatest weapon, so I went there in the guise of a Brahmin. There, after pleasing my mentor with my great devotion. I learned how to use my bow in various ways.

(V.44)

Thereafter, once while I was roaming around near the penance-grove, I killed a cow and terrified a bull because I was intoxicated with the Guru's blessings and my reasoning was clouded by my pride.

(V.45)

Then, trembling with bitter rage, a Brahmin who was the owner of these two, cursed me with these words, "Your wish to conquer your foe will never be fulfilled because in the battlefield, both the wheels of your chariot will be stuck in the earth".

(V.46)

I tried to pacify that Brahmin with sweet words but his ire could not be cooled. Because when once a fire starts in the forests on the mountainside, it is not quenched without devouring them. Throwing water etc. on it is of no avail.

(V.47)

Though the thorn of that curse pierced my heart and weakened my intellect, yet in the course of time, with the blessings of my Guru, I became more powerful than Arjuna by acquiring the knowledge of the greatest weapon, the Brahmastra, which is equal to a thousand weapons in its destructiveness.

(V.48)

It so happened that one day when my Guru was sleeping peacefully after placing his head in my lap, and my heart was grieving over the curse, I felt great pain at the back of my thigh suddenly.

(V.49)

While I sat there without moving so that my Guru should not wake up, and thinking what can be the reason for this pain, a fierce-looking insect with eight legs and beady eyes came out after hurting my thigh.

(V.50)

When the blood flowing from my wound touched the sleeping Guru, he woke up angrily and asked what the matter was. Then I showed him that fierce insect which had eaten into my body.

(V.51)

That sage looked at the insect angrily and burnt it to ashes with his glance. That insect now took on a blamelessly glowing form and bowing before the Guru, said :

(V.52)

"I am a demon and because of my great misdeed was cursed by my master, Sage Bhrigu. Now I have been absolved of this cursed insect-life because of your blessings. So I take my leave." Saying this he disappeared.

(V.53)

Thereafter, that great sage, known for his rage, became very angry and with burning eyes spoke to me: "Though you were wounded, you did not move, so you cannot be a Brahmin, because a Brahmin does not have that much courage. (V.54)

"O cheat, you have come here under false pretences and acquired the desired blameless of knowledge. But this knowledge will be of as little use to you as the shadow of the moon, though white, is to the ocean." (V.55)

From *Balabharata*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Selections

### SOMA PRABHA

SUKTIMUKTĀVALI (Sūktimuktāvalī) is an anthology of gnomic verses compiled by Somaprabha (Somaprabha, c. 13th century).

#### 1

### The Power of Worship

The worship of the worthy Jina destroys one's sins, and puts an end to one's misfortunes. It extends one's virtues, increases one's wealth and strengthens one's health. It also bestows good luck, happiness and victory. It brings heaven within one's reach and gives salvation. (9)

Whosoever worships Jinapati devoutly will have heaven as the courtyard of his house and the wealth of the kingdom as his beautiful spouse; blessings like good fortune, etc. will come to him of their own accord; and this whole world will revolve in the palm of his hand. (10)

As if it is angry, the terror does not come in front of a person who offers prayers to the Jina. Misfortune also stays away from him out of fear, and is destroyed everyday. Ill-luck also parts company with him like a beloved who has grown indifferent. But, like a true friend, his prosperity never leaves him. (11)

One who worships the Jina with flowers is worshipped by the eyes of smiling celestial maidens; one who bows before him even once is revered in three worlds day and night; One who sings his praises has one's praises sung by Lord Indra; and one who contemplates him desirelessly becomes the object of contemplation by the yogis. (12)

### The Nature of Wealth

Wealth, like a river, has a tendency to go to lower places. Like sound sleep, it destroys the consciousness. It strengthens a man's ego and, like smoke, it clouds his vision. It is as unstable as a flash of lightning. It makes the desires flare up like a forestfire. This wealth is like a wanton woman who roams around wilfully. (73)

Fie on this wealth which is envied by the relatives, stolen by the thieves and taken away by the kings on various pretexts. In a flash it is burnt to ashes by the fire, carried away by the water and, when put under the earth, is dug by the *yakshas*. For the sake of this wealth, a man is put to death by his evil-minded sons. (74)

Alas ! are there misdeeds that are not perpetrated even by any respectable people for the sake of acquiring wealth ? They flatter even a base person and stoop low. They loudly sing the praises of even their own enemy who is devoid of any virtues, and do not feel tired even in the service of an ungrateful person. (75)

Like a lotus swaying with the waters of the sea, wealth will go to an evil person but it never plants its feet firmly anywhere as if its feet were pierced by thorns. It destroys the reasoning of human beings like a sea of poison. Virtuous people reap its fruits by employing it in religious activities. (76)

From *Suktimuktavali*, c. 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

### The Victories of Jayanta

#### ABHAYADEVASURI

JAYANTAVIJAYA is a *mahakavya* written by Abhayadevasuri (Abhayadevasūri. 13th century) in 1221. In nineteen cantos, it narrates the various victories of Jayanta, King of Magadha.

After fulfilling the formalities, the poet describes King Vikramasimha, the ruler of Jayanti, a city of Magadha, his wife Pritimati and her sorrow because of her being childless. Subuddhi, the king's minister, mentions the 'Panca Parameshti' mantra as the only means to be blessed with a son. Once the king with the help of this mantra, frees a lady from the clutches of a *sura*, but

spares his life, who in turn gives him a pearl necklace which could bless a lady who wears it with a child. The queen wears it and gives birth to Jayanta in due course of time. Then there is a conventional description of the erotic sentiment. Once a battle between King Vikramasimha and the king of Simhala takes place as the former, inspite of repeated requests from the King of Simhala, does not return his elephant which, having gone astray, came to his kingdom. Jayanta kills the king of Simhala, sets out to conquer the four directions and marries Kanakavati, the daughter of King Pavangati.

One day King Vikramasimha under the influence of Susthitamuni attains *samyaktva* and gives away the kingdom to Jayanta. Jayanta then marries Ratisuncari, the daughter of King Vairisimha of Hastinapura and gets the sovereignty of Hastinapura also. He is blessed with two sons. Once Jayanta goes to worship in the temple of Nandisvaradvipa, where Indra, pleased with his devotion, wants to give him a boon, but he refuses it. The *kavya* ends highlighting the importance of charity.

Here are a few excerpts from the poem.

1

Regal Valour

In the battle-field, the sword of King Vikramasimha, drenched with the blood oozing from the heads of the elephants of his enemies, looked like the tongue of Yama, the god of death, with the rows of teeth, all set to devour the clan of his enemies. (1 : 66)

2

Royal Charity

O great king, when you rained your bounty, everybody on this earth, be it a deer or an elephant with huge bells, or a beautifully-feathered peacock, made merry. Only the king of serpents, Sheshanaga, could not take advantage of it because he had the burden of the earth on his head. (VI : 99)

3

Princely Splendour

In earlier times these kings, with their glittering finery looked like the sun in the palace; but in the company of the Prince Jayanta, the heir to the throne, they are looking a sunless day. CXVI : 26

## 4

## Dreadful Lion

When he had taken his fill of sweet and juicy fruits like oranges and bananas, there appeared a fearsome lion with a view to making a meal of him. That lion roared making the world tremble and struck at the earth with his thick bushy tail as if wanting to create cracks on it. (III:37-38)

## 5

## Summer

In the same way as the minstrels spread the fame of their king, the winds, heated by the rays of the sun and carrying the scattered pollen grains, have extended the reach of the season's heat generated by the burning forests on the mountain-side. And the whole world looks angry and red-faced like a bunch of full-blooming *palasha* flowers.

(XVIII:13-14)

## 6

## Woman's Beauty

The Creator has created Kanakavati's body with the grace of all the worlds, as if He wanted to put His own ability in creating young maidens to test. This doe-eyed beauty has surely been created by that master-craftsman of womanly beauty because I have never heard of or seen such a beautiful maiden anywhere else. (XIII:36-37)

From *Jayantavijaya*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Story of Mallinatha

## VINAYACHANDRASURI

MALLINATHACHARITA (Mallināthacarita) is a *mahākavya* written by Vinayachandrasuri (Vinayacandrasūri), 13th century) in 1229. The poem in eight cantos narrates the life-story of Mallinatha, the nineteenth Tirthankara, together with the story of his previous births and of his six friends. Many legends and episodes are also included in it. Hence the flow of the plot is very slow. Though the subject-matter is slight, it has been elaborated in eight lengthy cantos by giving numerous stories in support of the sermons given by different sages and by Mallinatha.

A few excerpts from the poem are given below :

1

### Lament of a Widow

O my lord, now who will apply the cooling paste mixed with sandal on my limbs tormented by the terrible heat. And who will paint my cheeks with lovely leaves which had been nurtured in the garden of love.

(1:171-172)

2

### Importance of Truth

As the lotus face of Sita is made more beautiful with the help of a sacred mark, as all the three worlds are made sacred by the flow of river Ganga, and as poetry becomes more entertaining with the help of meaningful verses, a man attains greatness with the help of truth in this world. (VII:63-64)

3

### A Love-lorn Lady

As the moonstone starts melting on seeing the rays of the moon, that abode of pure love, Padmavati, started sweating on seeing her beloved husband Ratanachandra. She drank the nectar of love again and again with her blue-lotus-like eyes which were devoid of all false modesty and were full of playfulness. (I:150-151)

4

### Child-care in Distress

Tormented by hunger, Rohitasva, son of Harishchandra, again said, "Father!" Like earlier times, the king told his wife to give sweets to the son. When Sutara, the wife heard such heart-burning words, she said, "My lord, what are you saying? Have you had some dream?"

(I:360-361)



## 5

## A Battle-field

In the battle-field, the elephants locked their tusks with other elephants, the warriors locked their swords with other warriors and the charioteers locked the front parts of their chariots with others. (II:166)

From *Mallinathacharita*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Importance of Dharma

## UDAYAPRABHASURI

DHARMABHYUDAYA (Dharmābhyudaya) is a *mahakavya* written by Udayaprabhasuri (Udayaprabhāsūri, 13th century) in 1233 at the request of the minister, Vastupala. It has fifteen cantos. As the name of the poem suggests, the main purpose of the work is to make the minister Vastupala understand the importance of dharma through many stories of the Tirthankaras, kings and other high personalities. It emphasises how only with the help of dharma they attained a high status. In the last canto, the minister, having realised the importance of dharma, endeavours for its attainment and visit many *tirthas*.

The following are a few excerpts from the work:

## 1

## The Fickle Nature of Lakshmi

How many men are there who, after boasting about being the masters of Lakshmi and trying to enjoy her, have not been deceived by her like a whore? While the saintly people discard her after using her like leaf-bowls, the greedy lowly men try to hold her tightly. (II:179-180)

## 2

## A Husband's Confession

My lady ! you are kind; you are the torch-bearer of the family, you are a woman of great character, while, I King Nala, am heartless, a blemish on the fair name of my family and have bad habits. I bow before you with all my misdeeds. (XI:385-386)

## 3

**The Wailing of a Mother**

(Queen Marudevi on the occasion of her son becoming a monk).

Now, in the absence of my son, this food appears to be a bad habit,  
clothes are like poison to me, and my ornaments have become a battle-field.  
Even this palace has become like a forest for me. (XIII:144)

## 4

**A Blend of Happiness and Sorrow**

All life on this earth is a blend of happiness and sorrow, which are engaged in fierce competition with each other in the manner of day and night bringing light and darkness respectively. (III:337)

## 5

**A Love-lorn Lady**

Thereafter, on hearing these words, young Dhanavati, consort of Dhana, went inside the inner chamber and considered every enjoyment a great torment because of her special affection for you. Her mind is concentrated only on you and with all her senses, she considers this world to be permeated by you like an ascetic who thinks of this world as permeated by God. (X:38-39)

## 6

**Royal Agony**

Who is this insolent fellow who has the audacity to throw an arrow, like an envoy trying to expand the path of death, at me, King of Magadha, who is considered an expert in the use of various weapons? Who wants to be swallowed by the jaws of the lion? Who wants to place his foot in the fire? Who is the man who wants to throw his hand in the spokes of the wheel of a carriage? (IV:22-23)

## 7

## Battle-field

The servants of the god of death played the game of stick and ball with the heads and arms of the kings who had fallen on the ground.

(IV:294)

## 8

## Rainy Season

The clouds were raining water which they had earlier taken from the oceans. On the pretext of flashes of lightning, they were throwing out the fire of the oceans. With their torrents they appeared bent on creating cracks in the earth. Those black thunderous clouds took on the appearance of the demons.

(IV:83-84)

## 9

## Materialism

Man is a being of this world. This world is like a dense forest in which the life of a man is like a well, below which there is hell where a python dwells. He is surrounded on all sides by poisonous snakes. The fear of the god of death is always present like an elephant on his head. Diseases are like bees which torment him from time to time. His age is always getting lesser like a tree eaten up by a rat. His life is full of many ups and down. In these agonising circumstances, only material desires are like drops of honey which give him great pleasure.

(VIII : 174-176)

From *Dharmabhyudaya*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Story of Vasantapala

## BALACHANDRASURI

VASANTAVILASA (*Vasantavilāsa*) by Balachandrasuri (*Bālacandrasūri*) is a historical *mahakavya* written between 1239 and 1277. In fourteen cantos, it describes the life-story of the minister, Vastupala, also called Vasantapala, born in a very noble and high family. The plot of the work is well-knit. It is rich in descriptions of seasons, sports, pleasures, sunrise, moonrise, battles, sending of messengers, etc.

After dilating on the nectar of poetry and other allied matters, the poet gives his life-history and also a description of Anahillapura Pattana. Then he describes

the kings of Gujarata from Mularaja to Bhimadeva II and how Viradhabala and his forefathers protected the kingdom of Gujarata. The poet then praises the abilities of two brothers Vastupala and Tejpala, who were appointed as ministers by King Viradhabala. Vastupala gets victory over Sankha, the king of Bhrgukaccha. Once Dharama appears to Vastupala in dream and requests him to endeavour for the promotion of religion, as a result of which he visits many *tirthas*, performs religious deeds, gives profuse wealth in charity and the *kavya* ends with a description of the death of Vastupala.

A few excerpts from the work are given below

1

The Glory of a Sword

Kumarapala's sword has gained expertise in severing the heads of wild lions. On the battle-field, with that sword he throws up a bridle like throwing up a ball. (III 29)

2

A Warrior's Feat

O envoy, I, Vastupala, am renowned as a trader, who weighs everything on the scales of his sword on the battle-field. In exchange for the heads of enemies; I give them the compensation of attaining heaven. (V : 44)

3

The Dilemma of a Warrior

On one side is the sound of bugles heralding a war. On the other side is the sound of the cries of his beloved. With a tortured heart, he is in a dilemma whether to stay in the house or go out for the war. (VI : 66)

4

A Love-lorn Lady

In her excitement, one lady is wearing her necklace on her hips and her ornamental waist-belt on her neck. She has put her large ear-rings on her wrist while she is wearing her bangles in her ears. (XI : 46)

On hearing the sound of bugle, some other lady, who was feeding her child, got up from her seat carrying a cat an her lips and childhood up to the left of the house. (XI:48)

"This Vasantapala has entered my heart. Now he should never go out from it"-thinking in this way, some lady covered her body with thorn, like hair standing on edge because of excitement.

## 5

## Royal Valour

"Is he Lord Indra ? Perhaps he is the sun-god ? Perhaps he is the moon-god? Or he may be some pond full of flowers." On seeing Vasantapala on the path the deities of the forest expressed their surprise in this way.

(XIII : 38)

## 6

## Horses on the Battle-field

Those horses, fearful lest the enemies should enter from somewhere after killing me, soon filled the mountains, the caves, all the directions, the forests and the skies with dust from all sides. (V : 17)

## 7

## A City

With the fragrant smoke of *agaru* incense and *dhupa* sticks in the air, abundance of elephant-hides and innumerable flags of the jewel of the dynasty, Udaradeva, fluttering in the breeze and giving an impression of hands clapping rhythmically, the city of Arahillapataka has taken on the appearance of Lord Shiva's cosmic dance. (II : 7)

In this city, the lover, on seeing many reflections on the gem-studded walls of the house and thinking that he is being observed, does not become hasty in his love-making during the night in spite of his beloved being impatient with love. (11 : 15)

This city is more beautiful than even Bhogavati or Amaravati. And the pond increases its beauty even more by throwing out foam produced by the churning of its waves. (II : 48)

8

## Spring

The newly-blossomed gardens are full of cuckoos singing your praises while the bees are embracing the bakula flowers and thus paying tributes by making musical sounds. (VI : 60)

Bees are busy sipping honey from the flowers of the mango tree. Now that spring is here, the period of grief of the love-lorn lady has come to an end. (VI : 71)

9

## Sunset

As a ripe fruit falls from the tree on the earth and its juice is scattered all around, the orb of the sun has fallen from the sky on the top of the western mountain and the redness of the dusk has spread everywhere. (VIII : 4)

10

## A Mountain

Your majesty, here on this mountain of Raivataka, the various birds enjoy themselves in love-making in the various rivers and, though bespattered with mud, the lovely she-crane never deserts her beloved. (XII : 22)

11

## The Agony of Love

O lucky Vasantapala, in her desire for your hand, Sadgati has started disliking even the evening moon. Because of her longing for your embraces, she does not even wear a necklace. Because of her affection for your portraits, she does not even enjoy listening to the strumming of the vina. And because she yearns to sleep on your chest, she does not lie down on the mattress even. (IV : 16)

After seeing Sadgati's extra-ordinary beauty, I, Vasantapala, have become feverish with yearning for her and have lost all interest in the affairs of the

administration. Sometimes I lie on my bed, then I go out into the gardens, then after a short while, I rush to my swimming pool, then again, I go out to attend some assembly of scholars. But nowhere can I find any peace.

(XIV : 28)

From *Vasantavilasa*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Munisuvrata

### ARHADDASA

MUNISUVRATA is a *mahakavya* written by Arhaddasa (Arhaddāsa, 13th century). In ten cantos it describes the life of Munisuvrata, the 20th Tirthankara, in a very ornate style. Unlike many other Jaina Sanskrit *mahakavyas*, it does not give the stories of the previous births of Munisuvrata. Therefore, the plot of this *kavya* does not have any interruptions. However, the present life of the Tirthankara has been described in detail.

Here are a few excerpts :

1

### Eulogy to Lord Chandraprabha

I bow before Lord Chandraprabha, whose body glows so beautifully that thinking this to be moonlight, the moonstone starts melting, the chakora birds look at it longingly and lily flowers start blooming even during the fortnight of the waning moon.

(I : 2)

2

### Airavata

The elephant of Lord Indra looked majestic with thirty-two faces. In each face, it has eight teeth and in every tooth, there is a water-body. Each water body has lotus-stems and these lotus-stems bear thirty-two lotus flowers of thirty-two petals each.

(V : 11)

3

### Assembly of Lord Munisuvrata

As Lord Indra looks beautiful with his one thousand eyes, as the sun looks fierce with its one thousand petals rays, as the lotus flower is beautiful

with its one thousand, as the Sheshanaga has one thousand hoods and as a Yaksha has a horde of gems, etc., he looked beautiful with a thousand ears.  
(VIII : 17)

4

### The Pangs of a Barren Woman

A mango tree that does not bear fruit, though in full bloom, is worthless, in the absence of its commander, an army is also worthless, if it does not attain any victory; during the rainy season, the groups of clouds that do not bring any rain are also worthless. In the same way, I, Queen Padmavati, bear a worthless womb which cannot produce a son.  
(III : 2)

5

### An Ideal King

It is very strange that though Sumitra, the king of ascetics, was himself devoid of all materialistic desires and free from all inhibitions, and he had taken a vow to defend everybody, he produced feelings of desire, inhibitions and love in others.  
(III : 9)

From *Munisuvrata*, 13th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

### An Elixir in Prose for the Ears

#### SAKALAVIDYACHAKRAVARTIN

SAKALAVIDYACHAKRAVARTIN (Sakalavidyācakraṇartin, 13th century), the author of *Gadyakarnamrita* (*Gadyakarnāmrta*) flourished under the patronage of the Hoysala King Somesvara (1234-56). Sakalavidyachakraṇartin is a title meaning "the Emperor Commanding all Branches of Learning". It had been conferred on the author as well as his grandfather. Sakalavidyachakraṇartin is very much influenced by Bana, the prose-writer par excellence. But he impresses us by his originality in the thematic arrangement of his work. *Gadyakarnamrita*, a romance bordering between two literary forms—*katha* and *akhyaṇika*—is remarkable for its diction in prose. It presents a unique blend of the mythological past and the historical present treated at par in its texture. The story begins with the amorous sports of Shiva and Parvati, Narada visiting them and finally Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, coming to them with the manuscript of this prose work by our author, to read out before the immortals the composition of a mortal, which contains the story of his own patron.



The following piece describes the birth of the hero, Someshvara, and the festivities following it.

The queen had reached the mature stage of her pregnancy. Her face looked pale. She delivered a male child at the appropriate time. The *jatakarmasamskara*, the auspicious rite after the birth of a child, was duly performed. The king was rejoiced to see the baby, the whole family rejoiced like the king, the whole kingdom rejoiced like the entire royal family, the people rejoiced like the entire kingdom, and like the people rejoiced with the world. When the newly-born baby opened his eyes, the eyes of the whole royal family bloomed with joy. The subjects of the king were delighted when he started sucking the breasts of his mother. The world ascended higher when he ascended the lap of his father. The people awoke when he used to rise in the morning. When he strode five steps, *dharma* in this *kalikala* was freed of its lameness.<sup>1</sup> Rajalakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, seemed to enter the royal palace to listen to him when he uttered a few words.

The ceremony of *chudakarma* or shaving of the head, was performed and the prince began to learn the alphabet. Sarasvati appeared to be endowed with one more son.

Unfortunately, as a result of some karma of her previous birth, Queen Kalavati succumbed to death. Overcoming his sorrow, the king appointed Padmavati as foster-mother, for the upbringing of the prince.

With the rope of *munja* tied around his waist, and a bow in his arm, the prince started to fulfil the duties of the first *ashrama*. He arduously pursued his studies, and having completed them, was given the last bath in the *gurukula*. He had become well-versed in all arts and had acquired mastery over manipulation of various arms. Now he was fully grown up and everyday he appeared to grow maturer. The Hoysalas rejoiced seeing him, like the sea over-flowing at the sight of the moon.

From *Gadyakamamrita*, 13th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## The Story of Shrikrishna

VENKATANATHA

VENKATANATHA (Veṅkatanātha, 13th-14th century), alias Vedantadeshika, was a poet and philosopher with more than fifty works to his credit. Among his poetic works,

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1. Viewed as a bull, *dharma* is said to be standing on all the four legs in *satya yuga*, and losing each leg in the three subsequent ages.

*Yadavabhyudaya* (Yādavābhyudaya) is the most famous and is studied with reverence, especially by the Shrivaiṣṇavas, the followers of Ramanuja.

*Yadavabhyudaya* is a *mahakavya* in twenty-four cantos in which the author has presented the story of *Bhagavata* in his inimitable style.

His mastery of language and richness of imagination are evident throughout. Hyperbole and fancy are his favourite figures of speech. His contribution to devotional and religious literature is considerable.

The passages given here are descriptions of (1) the seasons and (2) the city of Dvaraka.

The following description of the rainy season and autumn is from Canto V:

The sun departed from the south to the north,  
Embracing that direction with his rays;  
Krishna now desired to bring the rain  
Which was held back till then by summer.

Then came the rainy season,  
Dispelling the torment of cows caused by the sun,  
And wearing the dark green garment of various plants,  
And covered by numerous clouds.

The hills were given a ceremonial bath  
By the clouds that brought water from sacred rivers;  
They were also provided auspicious light  
With the flashes of lightning all around.

The flower-arrowed god of love  
Quickly broke the love-anger of women  
With the sharp-edged leaves of the *krakacchada* plants  
Clean and white, accompanied by the continuously humming bees.

In the lands where the clouds sprinkled water  
Many kinds of sprouts were born,  
As faith, compassion and other virtues  
Are born in the people seen by Lord Krishna.

The hearts of separated lovers were pierced  
By the arrow of the god of love;  
The drops of blood that were scattered then  
Verily became, as it were, the fire-flies.

The *kadamba* trees which had thorns in plenty  
And were shaking vigorously in the wind  
That was bringing countless drops of water,  
Exhibited all signs of one suffering from a cold.

The cluster of clouds, the veritable army of the love-god,  
Shone with the flashing weapon of lightning,  
Roaring deeply and holding the colourful rainbow,  
With the cranes forming a long line of flags.

The sky, echoing with the sound of cloud-drums,  
And adorned with the dance of the damsel lightning,  
Appeared like a stage for the god of love  
A fertile field for the nine emotions.

The reservoirs of water were filled to the brim;  
Most unexpectedly they abounded in water;  
The water that flowed out of them  
Caused abundance of water in other ponds too.

In the caves of Mount Govardhan,  
Which had large and flat grounds,  
The cowherds' life was made merrier even in heavy rains,  
By Krishna, the creator of the world.

In the cave, the milk-maids keeping Krishna in view,  
Danced before their husbands, to the accompaniment of song :  
The peacocks did likewise seeing the clouds  
And rejoiced in the rainy season.

Krishna wanted to stop his sport  
Of covering the sun and the moon with clouds,  
Since they were, in reality, his own eyes;  
One can terminate one's sport at will.

Then the days became black like collyrium  
In which were seen the different dance-poses of lightning :  
Their deftness was apparent in enlivening the directions  
And in making the world more pleasant to live in.

The sky had no scorching sun  
But shone with black and white clouds,

Like the minds of incredulous persons  
Who slowly gain the glow of wisdom.

The bees left the *kutaja* and *arjuna* trees  
Which had become useless due to the twist of time,  
And again made friends with the lotuses  
Which were now rich in all grandeur.

The rivers, holding the lotus-fans moving with ripples,  
And the clusters of bees which acted as umbrellas  
And waving the cowries of swan-groups  
Offered to the Lord all services befitting a king.

Lord Vishnu, the wielder of the *Shamga* bow,  
Brought his divine sleep to remove people's torment,  
It appeared in the form of cluster of clouds  
And took it back when he again wanted to sleep.

Peacock feathers that were strewn on the ground  
Shone like the glorious eyes of the earth  
Which were open to see Lord Krishna  
Who was roaming about to enjoy the autumn.

Clouds had given away their water  
To all beings, animate and inanimate;  
They never left the right path; and swans  
Praised their internal and external purity.

The rice plants attained full development  
Gradually from the nourishment received.  
But it caused them to bow in humility  
As those that follow Dharma do.

From the lustre of the Krishna-cloud  
Who wore on his head peacock feathers  
Which resembled the full-blown rainbow,  
Vrindavan had peacocks dancing even in autumn.

The sky, adorned with yellowish pollen of the *bandhuka* trees  
And black due to the blossoms of the *atasi* groves,  
Acquired with care resemblance to Lord Krishna  
Who wore a yellow robe and was dark in colour.

Mount Govardhan glittered with streams  
Which were mixed with the pollen of *saptacchada* trees,  
And shone as if he had the flow of rut  
And thus became the leader of the wild elephants.

Red lotus flowers in water  
With their reflections facing downwards  
Resembled Lord Trivikrama's<sup>1</sup> two feet —  
One on the earth and the other raised towards the sky.

When the mire disappeared completely,  
The roads became clearly visible again,  
As Vedic sacrifices emerge in the world  
When the followers of other faiths disappear.

Big oxen, roaring with intoxication  
And piercing the banks of rivers with their horns,  
Appeared like manifestations of arrogance  
And concealed even elephants among them.

Autumnal brilliance appeared splendid  
With the beauty of lotuses, red, white and black,  
Like the magical power of the creator  
Who in sport revealed his three qualities to the world.

The river Yamuna possessing lotus eyes,  
Pranced, slipping here and there,  
As if she were intoxicated  
By consuming the honey of the lotuses.

Yamuna's waves resembled the folds on a woman's belly,  
Her shape was attractive since it was slim,  
And Krishna enjoyed seeing her, a befitting companion,  
Although she had been seen well earlier.

The Yamuna looked like the Shona with red lotuses,  
She looked like herself with blue flowers,  
And she appeared like the Ganga with white lilies;  
Though one, she took several forms to please Krishna.

1. Vishnu in his incarnation as Vamana.

Seeing the Yamuna full of white lilies  
 And the night resplendent with stars  
 And the sky adorned with rows of swans  
 Krishna felt that he saw the same thing in three forms.

Autumn imitated Krishna's dress with *bandhuka* flowers;  
 And his unequalled lustre with the blue lotuses  
 And the beauty of his face with the red lotuses :  
 Thus she earned a little resemblance with him.

Throughout autumn that brought wrinkles  
 To the clouds and new youth to the sky,  
 And exhibited its amazing power,  
 Krishna showed his own power.

Autumnal evenings served the Lord  
 With the music of the bees in the lilies,  
 Showing him the moon-mirror  
 And holding white cowries as moonlight.

The humming of bees  
 Hovering over red, black and white lotuses  
 Spread everywhere like the sound of drums  
 Beaten by the love-god for conquering the world.

The blue sky, full of white clouds,  
 Which resembled the cast-off skins of snakes,  
 Looked like the sapphire-studded ground  
 Strewn with white cowries, fit for amorous play.

The twice-born,<sup>1</sup> pure by nature,  
 Desiring the clean water of the holy ponds,  
 Rushed to perform the rituals proper for the time,  
 When they saw the evening bright with *bandhuka* flowers.  
 The rivers, enjoyed by their lover  
 In the night of the rainy season,

Were looking tired, as it were,  
And made very slow movements in autumn.

The sun shone in the blue sky  
Emerging from the ocean-like rainy season,  
Like *Kaustubha*, the king of gems,  
Shining on the vast blue chest of Lord Vishnu.

The several directions, main and intermediate,  
Like people of different classes  
Became clearly visible in the sky,  
Which was, as it were, compressed in the rains.

Before the sun came out of the clouds  
The lotus in the ponds awoke  
Like Goddess Lakshmi, the Daughter of the Ocean,  
Gets up before Vishnu who carries the fiery disc.

Eliminating all mushrooms from the earth  
And sprinkling it with the rutting liquid of elephants  
Strewing the pollen of the *saptacchada* plants all over  
The autumn made the world fit for amorous sports.

The rivers which increased in size from the Krishna-cloud  
Were flowing capriciously in rainy season  
But in autumn, they regained their pristine purity  
Like women, who become shy when they meet their lovers.

Lord Krishna was very much pleased  
With the water of the Yamuna, that excelled in sweetness  
And were cool, placid and easy to swim in  
Even for ladies, and resembled his devotees' hearts.

Day by day, the streams became thinner  
And the water level went down steadily,  
The sand beds became steps indeed  
For Goddess Lakshmi to enter the lotus garden.

The rows of swans flying in the clouds  
Appeared like necklaces offered,  
To the goddess of the three worlds.  
By Time who was pleased and delighted.

Due to absence of rain and presence of sun  
The roads regained their original state.  
They were freed from mire and dirt  
Which had accumulated due to rain and the absence of sun.

In the highways that were still a bit wet  
The land-lotuses scattered their tormenting pollen;  
It was perhaps to prevent the travellers  
From leaving their beloveds, that they did so.

Royal swans which beat the lotus leaves  
With their wings and made melodious sounds  
Became the musical instruments  
Used to awaken the sleeping Lord Vishnu.

Autumn appeared like a chamber maid  
Of Lord Vishnu, with her earrings of *kalhara* flowers  
And with the fore-head mark of *bandhuka* flowers  
And with the talcum powder of the lotus pollen.

Turbidity left the water of the rivers  
Which had concealed their depth by swiftness,  
And entered the hearts of the wives of brave soldiers  
Because autumn was the time of wars.

The waters of ponds, variegated in colour  
Due to the new leaves of the lotus plants,  
Gained similarity with the disc of the moon  
Where there appears a black spot.

The lord, who is ever free from slumber  
Gave the world rich variety on the pretext of his sleep.  
He awakened apparently and bestowed on the people  
An awakening appropriate to their dharma.

*ii*

The following description of Dvaraka is taken from Canto VI.

Vishvakarma, the Divine Sculptor,  
Urged by Brahma and other gods,  
Constructed the city of Dvaraka for the pleasure of Krishna,  
A heap of excellences, full of roads and mansions,



He had studied the science of sculpture  
Taught by Brahma completely.  
He decided to build auspicious houses  
Which would resemble the residences of gods.

For the movement of Krishna's armies  
He built a bridge across the ocean,  
With the mysterious power of Krishna  
The enemies could not find their way on it.

Vishvakarma's son, Nala, had built a bridge earlier;  
A new bridge, superior to it was built;  
Seeing it, Vishvakarma was fully satisfied,  
But he wondered whether Krishna would be happy with it.

That bridge, spanning from one shore to another,  
And constructed by the Divine Sculptor,  
Looked like the rod of a balance  
Kept for weighing Dvaraka against the rest of the world.

When the Celestial Sculptor himself  
Came and reported that the city was ready,  
Lord Krishna, the eye of all good people,  
Wished to see it, as though he had not seen it before.

The city was so beautiful, comparable only to its own reflection.  
All standards of comparison totally nullified by it,  
Krishna saw it first in the waters of the sea,  
Which seem to have offered it with its own hands.

The new city with its bright and magnificent mansions,  
Which resembled the gem-studded peaks of Mount Meru,  
Pleased Krishna, the Lord of the Universe,  
Who kept looking at it, all in smiles.

Krishna, the Lord of the Vrishni and Andhaka clans  
Entered with all his retinue and citizens  
That glorious city of sky-scrapers  
Which was the very fulfilment of all Yogas.

That Lord of the Universe, whose city is above the heaven  
And who knows no destruction even in the Deluge.  
Made Dvaraka his residence, and brought it glory  
Which even Paradise envied.

Krishna settled all the Yadus  
In the proper quarters of Dvaraka  
Which shone with his insignia;  
He took it to be equal to Ayodhya and Mathura.

The city of Dvaraka touched  
Both the ocean and the sky.  
The gods who saw that city  
Thought their city was just its shadow.

The sea incessantly hit the fort  
Of Dvaraka with its mighty waves;  
As if to tell the world that not even the angry gods  
Could shake or topple that great city,

It appeared as if the morning breeze  
Entered the bed-rooms of the mansions there  
Just to collect the fragrance of the damsels  
So that it could be deposited in the lotuses.

In that city, the fumes of incense  
Which spread, creating an illusion of pigeons,  
Made fragrant the aerial vehicles of the celestials  
Who had come there as visitors.

That city, bedecked with rows of mansions  
Which appeared larger by the splendour of their gems,  
Was delighted, seeing its own beauty in the ocean,  
Fit for the enjoyment of the Lord.

Even during times when it was proper to be shy  
The damsels just ignored the lamps in that city  
Because their efforts to extinguish the gem-lamps  
By throwing cosmetic powder on them had failed.

The gods, who were in the pictures,  
Never moved out even when they attained power  
On account of the special worship performed,  
Being held there by the virtues of the women there.

In that city, the elephants on guard  
Assumed the grandeur of the sea  
When they moved their trunks,  
Their ornamental conchs appeared to float on the waves.

The sky-scrapers of the city  
Were higher than heaven;  
The air-chariots of the celestial gods  
Were flying low, as it were, due to shame.

The people of that city were not bothered  
Either by the six plagues<sup>1</sup> or by the six tormenting waves.<sup>2</sup>  
Even without the effort of performing Yoga,  
They could concentrate their minds on Lord Krishna at the end.

From the glorious presence of Krishna, the Lord of the Universe,  
Who is not at all bound by space and time,  
Even the gardens of entertainment and enjoyment  
Became groves of penance, fit for samadhi.

When the holy men, pure and sinless  
Wished the Lord to partake of the offerings in sacrifices,  
He received them with relish even before invitation,  
Because he was always present in the city.

Princesses, who were reaching the zenith  
Of the high tides of the ocean of pleasure,  
Approached Lord Krishna and entertained him  
Meditated upon by those disinterested in pleasure.

The windows of that city were decorated with corals;  
It had a fort adorned with leafy trees;  
Many fine elephants roamed in it,  
And really, it looked like the love-god's garden of joy.

The moon bruised by hitting the flag-poles of houses;  
His lustre oozed down and painted them  
And so, they looked ever new,  
Even though they had been built long ago.

The royal mansions of Dvaraka  
Shining with unequalled splendour  
Which was beyond the reach of words and mind,  
Made Sudharma, the hall divine, disappear.

1. Drought, excessive rain, swarm of rats, locusts, birds, and invading kings.
2. Hunger, thirst, decay, death, grief and illness.

Even though Dvaraka was on the earth  
 It had numerous divine glories;  
 Thus, it eliminated the desire of ascetics  
 To go to the city of Indra for celestial pleasures.

The precious gems at the top of the mansions  
 Scattered luminous rays all around.  
 The sun collected them every day with his hands  
 Of rays and shone brightly, as it were.

The stars became ashamed  
 Whenever they saw the brilliance of the gems  
 In the necklaces of ladies  
 Sitting in the balconies of palaces.

The ladies could see their faces  
 Reflected in the shining walls of precious stones;  
 But they too sometimes looked at the mirrors  
 As though it were an auspicious duty.

The city had sky-scraping towers  
 Charming with many paintings, which proclaimed  
 The glorious magnificence of Krishna,  
 The progenitor of the Universe.

The horses there laughed at Ucchaishravas, the divine horse.  
 Its elephants mocked at Airavata, the celestial elephant.  
 Its citizens derided the gods, its ladies the nymphs.  
 The city of Dvaraka was itself heaven.

The forts of that city confused new-comers  
 Who took the crystal walls to be open doors;  
 The citizens, hiding their smiles,  
 Stopped them from hitting the walls.

The lakes of that city brimmed with clean water  
 Which looked like liquified crystal;  
 Sweeter than nectar, it reflected distant things;  
 The lakes were comparable to the minds of good people.

Vishvakarma, the architect, felt satisfied  
 With the city, which enhanced the fame of the ocean;  
 This made Visvakarma ashamed of earlier constructions  
 Like the city of Lanka.

The city was resplendent with heaps of gems  
 Krishna, the Lord of the three worlds, being the brightest;  
 The ocean carried that lovely city  
 On its bosom, like a jewel.

To the sages that meditate on Lord Krishna  
 Dvaraka became dearer than the ocean of milk  
 And the disc of the sun  
 And the higher regions of the sky.

The beautiful ladies of Dvaraka  
 Drank all the juice of the moon;  
 The moon-stones, with the flood of their liquid,  
 Tried to replenish the moon.

The city was wavy with rows of horses  
 And resounding with the music of festivities  
 With hordes of lustrous gems it resembled the ocean  
 Just as the ocean resembled it.

The ocean hit the fort of Dvaraka  
 Scattering drops of water high up in the sky.  
 With those drops, like pearls,  
 The sky became full of stars, even during the day.

The citizens of Dvaraka were blessed  
 With spouses, children and long life.  
 They scrupulously followed Dharma  
 And all other desired objects came to them on their own.

From *Yadavabhyudaya*, 13th-14th century

Tr. by H.V. Nagaraja Rao

### Five Stanzas

#### LOLIMBARAJA

HARIVILASA (Harivilāsa) was written by Lolimbaraja (Lolimbarāja, 14th century), poet and also a great exponent of Ayurveda. It is a devotional work. In the five cantos he tells the story of Krishna's childhood, ending with the death of Kamsa.

We do not know what virtuous deeds were performed by Nanda and his spouse so that the protector of all the worlds, lotus-eyed Krishna, chose their laps to play on.

The spouse of Nanda was crying bitterly saying, "Where has my son gone?" She was wandering in and out of the house on all sides. Perhaps she was unable to distinguish the blue-complexioned child Krishna from the floor made of blue gems. (9)

Demoness Putana came for the specific purpose of killing Krishna, but was killed by him. An evil-minded person gets the treatment he had thought for others. (18)

(The milkmaids of Vraja are complaining to Nanda's wife.)

"O wife of Nanda ! this son of yours enters our houses like a thief in our absence and eats our butter and curds and drinks our milk. (26)

"He also shares all these things with his friends standing outside, and afterwards he breaks all the empty pots. He always commits such misdeeds, and is not afraid of anybody". (27)

From *Harivilasa*, 14th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Two Episodes

### VALLALA

BHOJAPRABANDHA (Bhojaprabandha) by Vallala (Vallāla, 14th century) or Ballala is a popular Sanskrit work, in which prose and verse are mixed. It contains fanciful anecdotes and episodes related to King Bhoja of Dhara, glorifying his proverbial interest in good poetry, especially that of Kalidasa, and his grand generosity and charity. The work is not historical but imaginary, as all great poets of Sanskrit like Kalisasa, Magha, Banabhatta, etc. belonging to different periods of history are described here as living and composing poems under the patronage of King Bhoja.

Only two of the many interesting episodes are given here. The first episode of *Pseudo-Poets* draws the distinction between good and bad poetry and points out that poets are born and not made. The second episode of the *Operation of the Skull of King Bhoja* highlights the miracle of medical science suggesting that even in the middle ages there were skilled brain surgeons proficient in anaesthesia.

### 1

### The Episode of Pseudo-Poets

Once upon a time some learned men, proficient in the Vedic lore and the traditional law (Smṛti), anticipating King Bhoja's interest in poetry, sat out-

side the city, contemplating, "We will compose a poem by the grace of Goddess Bhuvanesvari". One of them, being proud of his learning, read out one foot of a verse:

O Lord of kings ! Give us food !

Another one read out:

Consisting of broth with clarified butter.

But the remaining half of the verse did not come up. About that time, poet Kalidasa visited the temple to pay obeisance to the deity. Seeing him, they said to him, "We know all the Vedas. But King Bhoja gives us nothing. He gives away profuse rewards to persons like you. We have, therefore, arrived here in order to compose a poem. Having pondered for a long time, we are able to compose only the first hemistich. We request you to complete the verse by composing its second hemistich. Then the king might give us something as reward."

Having said this, they recited the first half of the composed verse to him. Kalidasa, hearing the first hemistich, completed the verse, saying:

Give us curd also, made of she-buffalo's milk,

As white as the light of the autumn moon.

They then having arrived at the royal palace told the door-keepers: "We have come here after having composed a poem. Take us to the king." The door-keepers, mocking at them out of curiosity, went to the king and after obeisance told him:

O Great among kings ! Some Vedic scholars,

Having teeth like the black beans,

Keeping their hands on their waist,

Wreckers of poetry are waiting for your audience.

Then they, being allowed by the king to enter and having seen the royal fortune, together in one voice read their poem. The king, having listened to the poem and realizing that the latter part of the poem has been composed by Kalidasa, told the Brahmins: "One who made the first hemistich is not a poet at all and hence should never be asked to compose a poem. I therefore reward the second hemistich and not the first one." Having said this, the king gave a lac for each letter of verse. When they had departed after taking the reward, the king looking at Kalidasa told him, "Poet ! did you compose the second hemistich of the verse ?" The poet replied,

Only the experienced connoisseur fully knows

The sweetness of the lower lip, the plumpness of the breasts,

The sharpness of the eyes,

And the maturity (ripeness) in the poem.

The king reacted, "O good poet ! You are right.

It may appear the same to all in taste  
 But its real relish  
 Is known only to a poet.  
 Having pondered and pondered over all things of this world  
 Only three things have fascinated our mind.  
 The sweet juice of the sugarcane, the genius of the poet,  
 And the swaying of the glances of the beautiful damsels."

2

### The Episode of the Operation on the Skull of King Bhoja

Once King Bhoja went out of the city and cleansed his skull with the fresh water of a lake, as was his habit from the days of childhood. During the cleansing process, a tiny fish entered his skull through the nostril and settled there. The king, unaware of this incident, returned to his city. From the moment of cleansing, a severe pain developed in his head. The pain did not subside even when treated carefully by the proficient local physicians. The king remained ill suffering day and night, and nobody was able to diagnose his serious disease.

His body became pale and thin, feeling pain like a lotus in winter; his face was devoid of lustre like the moon swallowed by Rahu. His disease spread wide like fire in a dry forest.

Thus, one whole year passed and nobody was able to cure him of his deadly disease. The king, being sick of taking the same types of drugs everyday, once spoke in strained voice to his trusted minister, named Buddhisagara, who was already immersed in the ocean of the grief on account of the king's incurable illness.

"O Buddhisagara ! Hereafter no physician should stay in my city. You take away all the medicines expounded in the compendia of physicians like Vagbhata and throw them into the river. Then see me. Now my time to go to heaven has come."

Hearing these tormenting words of the king, all citizens, poets and the queens and attendants of the royal harem wept bitterly and constantly shed tears.

In the meantime, Lord Indra, sitting in the assembly of the gods, asked the sage Narada, the holder of the lute, present in the company of the ascetics, "O sage ! what is the latest news on the earth ?" Narada replied, "O Lord of the gods ! There is nothing unusual except that King Bhoja of Dhara is afflicted with some incurable disease. Being frustrated, the king has ban-



ished physicians from his city and has declared that medical science is untruthful and invalid."

Hearing this, Indra told Ashvinikumara, the twin physicians of heaven, standing nearby: "O divine physicians ! how can the medical science of Dhanvantari be false ?" Then they said "Lord of the gods ! The medical discipline of Dhanvantari is not false at all. The king is tormented with the disease which can be detected only by the gods." Indra: "What is that incurable disease ? Do you know it ?" Then they replied, "Lord ! when King Bhoja, as was his wont, was cleansing his skull, a tiny fish entered it. That is the root cause of the disease." Then Indra, with a smile on his face, said: "You should at once go there, otherwise hereafter, nobody on earth would believe in the science of medicine. King Bhoja is the abode of the sports of the goddess of learning and the retriever of the scriptures." Then by the order of Lord Indra, both of the divine physicians, disguised as Brahmins, reached the city of Dhara and told the door-keeper: "O door-keeper ! We two are physicians and have come here from Kashi to establish the truthfulness and validity of medical science which King Bhoja has openly declared ineffective and false and to cure him of his deadly disease. Go and inform the king about it." Then the door-keeper replied, "O Brahmins, the king has strictly prohibited the entry of any physician into his house. He is seriously ill. It is not therefore proper to inform him of your arrival." In the meantime, the minister Buddhisagara came out of the house for some urgent work and, seeing the strangers, asked them, "Who are you ?" Then they told him why they had come there. Thereafter Buddhisagara took them to the king. King Bhoja, observing the lustre on their face, took them to be celestial beings and thought that they might be capable of relieving him of his disease. Having decided thus, he honoured them profusely. Then they told him, "King ! Do not fear. Your disease is gone. But you should move with us to some secluded place." The king did so accordingly. They, then, made the king unconscious by using some anaesthetic powder, took out his skull, caught hold of the tiny fish hiding inside the sinus of the skull, placed it in a vessel and by the surgery joined and replaced the skull in its place properly, brought the king again to his senses by the use of the herb *Sanjivani* and then showed him the tiny fish. Seeing it and being surprised, the king asked them, "What is it ?" They told him, "O king ! You got it when you were cleansing your skull, as has been your habit since your childhood." Thereafter the king recognizing them to be the divine physicians, asked them for the atonement, "What is wholesome and beneficial now for me ?" Then they replied,

Bathing in lukewarm water, the drinking of milk,  
The best and finest of women,  
O mortals ! These are beneficial and wholesome for you...."

The king, hearing them address him as 'O Mortals', held their hands in his hands immediately, saying, "If we are mortals, who are you then ?" They at once disappeared saying, "The last line of this verse is to be completed by Kalidasa."

The king, astonished at this, called all people and told them everything that had happened. Everyone was surprised and stunned to hear the king. Then Kalidasa completed the verse by composing the last line :

"And the food hot and with clarified butter". The king, then, apprehending Kalidasa to be a divine being in the form of a man, honoured him abundantly.

From *Bhojaprabandha*, 14th century

Tr. by R.S. Nagar

## Selections

### UTPREKSHAVALLABHA

#### 1

#### Shiva, the Beggar

BHIKSHATANAKAVYAM (Bhikṣāṭanakaṣyāṃ) is the work of Utprekshavallabha (Utpreksāvallabha, 14th century) and comprises forty small chapters. In this work the poet describes in detail the effect produced by Lord Shiva on the ladies of the City of the Gods when he set out to beg for alms. The ladies came out of their houses, some out of curiosity, some out of devotion. They teased and taunted Him and made comments about His old way of dressing and His strange habits.

Here, in this excerpt from the nineteenth chapter, they are talking about his life and love:

In this whole world, except Hīmalaya, who would have given his daughter in marriage to one who vanquished the god of love as well as his own father-in-law? And who else, besides Parvati, would have performed severe penance in order to attain him ?

•

Without any hesitation, Lord Shiva drank all the deadly poison when begged by the gods to do so. I believe that the men possessing good qualities think that drinking of poison is better than not acceding to the requests of the beseechers.

•

Though this Shiva is the spouse of Parvati, he has given the place of honour to Ganga, the river of the gods by placing her on his head. It is really

surprising that even then he is not made the object of Goddess Parvati's ire resulting in her kicks.

•

Alas ! the ocean of milk gave poison to the god of the gods while pleasing other gods by giving them nectar. It appears that it is the nature of the water-bodies to have inclination for the lowly, and disinclination for the high-ups.

•

His occupation is begging and his clothing, the skin of deer. His vehicle is a bull. Then what else can this Lord Shiva need ? As other people strive for good things and for prosperity, the mighty one strives for the unnatural state of poverty.

From *Bhikshatanakavyam*, 14th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## 2

### Verses on a Beautiful Lady

SUNDARISHATAKAM (Sundarīśatakam) of a hundred and eleven verses, composed by Utprekshavallabha, describes the beauty of various features of women. It also describes the joy experienced in the company of the beautiful beloved as well as the suffering caused by separation from her.

O beautiful maiden, it appears that the newly-built path for the chariot of the sun of your youth itself in your body creates the illusion of a row of fine hair in the minds of men.

•

O bewitching lady, there can be no doubt about this that your face is full of nectar. It has been conclusively proved because it gave new life to the completely burnt-out love-god, the beloved of Rati.

•

O my beautiful beloved, as commanded by the god of love, youth has entered your body. But it is as bewildered as a new servant entering the palace of the king. ..

○ my beloved, whose face is as beautiful as the moon, your body is very soft, your lower lip is softer than your body; your voice is softer than your lower lip; and your smile is softer than your voice even. Then why does it break my heart ?

•

○ my beloved, the sandal-paste becomes as scorching as fire; nectar looks like poison and this life becomes as terrifying as death for the people separated from their beloved, because their way of thinking is different from that of ordinary people.

From *Sundarishatakam*, 14th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

### Gnomic Verses

MADHUSUDANA DUJANTI

ANYAPADESHASHATAKAM (Anyāpadesāśatakam) is a collection of a hundred and ten verses and was composed by Madhusūdana Dujanti (Madhusudana Dujanti, 14th century) also known as Madhusudanakavi, son of Padmanabha. In these verses, the poet has not confined himself to one subject. He has rather touched upon many topics.

There are many types of flowers that blossom on this earth. Let them be. But what we say is absolutely true. ○ *champakā* tree, blessed is your life in that before the beauty of your flowers, even the glitter of gold appears dimmed; not to say anything about the brilliance of other things.

•

What is the relationship between a cloud and a peacock so that, on seeing the cloud, it starts dancing ? By what bonds is the *chakori* bird attached to the moon ? What can be the reason behind a moth's circling round the fire ? It has been observed that the inclinations of the creatures are generally controlled by God.

•

In the past, present and future there can never be any king worthy of being compared with King Janaka, because it was Janaka who gave away a wish-fulfilling creeper like Sita to Lord Rama, the protector of three worlds, and was blessed by him before all the kings assembled there.

•

O swan, you may fly in the midst of a bouquet of lotus-flowers or circle around them, but it is all in vain. It is only the bee that is a connoisseur and can have access to the essence of these flowers which is hidden in the innermost recesses of their hearts.

•

O King of Elephants, do not stretch your trunk before this well, even if you are suffering from thirst, because even after stretching your trunk, you are not going to get any water from this well. Have patience, for two or three days more and then all these ponds bearing lotus flowers will be flooded with waters by torrential rains.

From *Anyapadeshashatakam*, 14th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Tale of Shantinatha

MUNIBHADRASURI

SHANTINATHACHARITA (*Śāntināthacarita*) is a *mahakavya* written in 1353 by Munibhadrasuri (Munibhadrasūri, 14th century). In nineteen cantos, it deals with the life of Lord Shantinatha, the sixteenth Tirthankara. It describes the six preceding births of the lord. Other stories have also been embedded here which are generally connected with the previous births of Lord Shantinatha. Hence the plot flows smoothly.

The following are a few excerpts from the work :

1

### Good Deeds

Prosperity originates from the virtuous deeds of men like the river Ganga, which touches the feet of Lord Vishnu and which is also present on the head of Lord Shiva and has its origin in the Himalayas. (III : 31)

2

### A Cock-fight

Here, the cocks are smeared with blood oozing out of the wounds inflicted by their antagonists' beaks. It appears as if their bodies are smeared with vermillion during love-making. (XI : 200)

3

### The Iconoclast

That wretched fellow, Kunjarasimha, grabbed the stone idol of a god and threatened Puradevi, saying this, "Lady, if you do not give me a lot of money, then I am going to crush you with this."

4

### Good Company

Even lesser objects gain importance when they seek the company of greater beings. That is why the people worshipping Lord Ganesha also pay their respects to the rat, his vehicle. (1 : 22)

5

### A Childless Person

Without that jewel of the family, all is lost as without good conduct, humility, good fortune and prosperity are of no use. It is like building a palace without domes or creating a poetic composition without lyrical quality. (IV : 70)

\*

A house cannot look beautiful without a son, as the sky, though full of stars, cannot look beautiful in the absence of the moon. A forest is no forest in the absence of a lion, and in the absence of a brave man, the field of fame is meaningless. (IV : 71)

6

### The Battle-field

I suspect that, on seeing the skies filled with dust rained by the hooves of horses on the battle-field, the two elephants guarding the quarters fled away in panic. (V : 150)

\*

On the battle-field, the heads of great warriors struck down by the swords of their enemies appeared like flowers showered by demi-gods who had enjoyed that spectacle of war. (V : 156)

### The Nature of Desire

As fire cannot be put out by feeding fuel in it, or as an ocean can never have enough of water, or as a *chakora* can never have his fill of moonlight, a human being is never satisfied with material objects. (VIII : 106)

From *Shantinathacharita*, 14th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

### A Bouquet of Hymns

#### JAGADDHARA BHATTA

STUTIKUSUMANJALI (Stutikusumāñjali) by Jagaddhara Bhatta (Jagaddhara Bhaṭṭa, 14th century) is a poem in praise of Shiva in 38 chapters. Some chapters describe various forms of Lord Shiva, some others call upon him to redress the poet's grievances, while in certain other chapters the poet calls upon the people to seek the shelter and blessings of Lord Shiva. In the last chapter, the poet invokes Lord's blessings on his book.

Salutation to Lord Shiva, the progenitor of Lord Kartikeya who is the conqueror of Tarakasura; to him whose eyes have given shelter to the brightness of the sun, the moon and the fire; also to that Lord, devotion to whom saves this world from sufferings. Salutations again and again to him who bears the moon on his forehead. (II.27)

May Lord Shiva's moonlight, the water of the Ganga born on his head, the nectar from the golden urn held in his hand, his loving glance and his spotless laughter cool the heat produced by the sufferings of the world !

(III.28)

May Lord Shiva, in the form of Harihara, shower blessings on you ! In this, one-half of his body, which is as fair as the moon, is worshipped by Goddess Parvati with blue lotuses, while the other half which is as dark as the bee is worshipped by Goddess Lakshmi with white malati flowers. The gods look unblinkingly at this manifestation of Lord Shiva, drinking him as it were with their eyes. (IV.3)

•

I seek the shelter of that Lord Shiva, the bestower of *moksha*, who woos

both Goddess Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas and the mother of Lord Ganesha, and the river Ganga, the purifier of all the worlds, at the same time. (VIII.38)

•

O Lord ! I do not find the capital of Lord Indra very attractive, nor do I find any pleasure in the golden Mount Sumeru. For me, that forest is my greatest refuge where I have your lotus-like feet undistracted. (IX.7)

•

O Lord ! You cannot desert me by thinking that I am a sinner and an evil man. The virtuous and fearless persons do not need your protection. Because I am ignoble, mean and a sinner, I deserve the greatest mercy from you. (IX.37)

•

O Lord ! you are the object of worship, the worshipper and the worship itself. Nothing exists except you. The feeling that I am a worshipper and you are the object of my worship is born of ignorance which creates false divisions. (XII.200)

•

Salutation to Goddess Lakshmi whose merciful glances fulfil all our desires! But in what words can one describe the magnanimous mercy of Lord Shiva who gifted away to child Upamanyu the great ocean which had produced Goddess Lakshmi. (XIII.42)

•

Though a part of Lord Shiva's body is occupied just by Goddess Parvati, daughter of the Himalayas, and he wears a part of the moon on his crown, and holds a part of the axe in his hand, yet he bestows his full compassion on a devotee who has just sought his shelter. May that undivided protection be propitious ! (XV.37)



In this world, the jewels do not give any satisfaction, hymns are also useless, various medicines and tonics also do not serve any purpose, and often even nectar is not able to cool the heat generated by one's sins. Therefore, one should seek the protection of only the most merciful Lord Shiva.

(XVIII.22)

•

O Lord ! on your forehead you carry the fire as well as the water; on your head you carry the pleasurable moon side by side with the horrible skulls and in your other hand, an urn filled with nectar. The strange appearance of yours is really astonishing.

(XIX.28)

•

O God ! at the time of the end of this world, when you prepare for your *tandava* dance, the dance of destruction, and put on a very horrifying appearance, then your bull Nandi beats the drum and the peacock, the carrier of Lord Kartikeya, starts dancing to the beat of the drum. On seeing it dance, you start smiling. We worship that playful divine smile.

(XX.12)

•

In order to attain salvation, I worship that form of Lord Shiva mingled with half of Goddess Parvati, wherein the half-moon in the crown of Lord Shiva looks as beautiful as the face of the goddess.

(XXI.2)

•

O Lord ! the glance of yours, which made the god of love formless, dispels the laziness of the people who seek your protection. May this unblinking glance of yours be raised for the wellbeing of good people and shower blessings on them !

(XXV.25)

•

O Lord ! you wear the moon like a jewel in your crown ! Long ago Lord Vishnu could not fathom your greatness, nor could Lord Brahma, even with the help of the rituals laid down by the scriptures. So how can we, with our minds occupied with worldly experiences, even think of doing that?

(XXVII.6)

•

O Lord ! your neck glitters darkly like black iron, your fire-spouting eye drives Yama away in a moment; your voice though harsh like that of Goddess Kali, dissolves the sins of your devotees. So who can save me, if not these three?  
(XXX.56)

•

O Lord ! we salute the incomparable form of Sheshanaga whose one thousand foreheads find fulfilment of their life in bowing before you, whose two thousand eyes feel blessed by seeing your beauteous form and by listening to your extra-ordinary exploits, and whose two thousand tongues find pleasure in explaining your virtues.  
(XXXIII.4)

•

May God who had no beginning, whose matted locks are swayed by the flow of Ganga, whose neck is surrounded by a poisonous snake, who bears earth, water, fire, sky, the moon and the sun in his body, who wears elephant-skin on his shoulder, who has gold-like yellow locks on his head and who smears his whole body with ashes as white as the leaf of *saptaparna* tree, destroy our sins !  
(XXXIV.6)

•

O Lord ! those people who worship you, the destroyer of the sufferings of this world, earn virtue as pure as the rays of the moon. They please the minds of learned men with their beautiful compositions. Even the upraised brows of angry Yama are not able to strike fear in their hearts.  
(XXXVI.4)

•

As the water of the pond, though muddied, is beautified by the lotuses; and as the hood of a snake, though poisonous, is made enchanting by the gems studded on it; in the same way, this human life, though sinful, is being made worthwhile by singing the praises of Lord Shiva.

(XXXVIII.4)

—

## Spring and Love

### JYOTIRISHVARA

JYOTIRISHVARA (Jyotiṛīśvara, 14th century), poet and playwright, owned the sobriquet *Kavishekharacharya*. (Kaviśekhharācārya). He was the grandfather of Vidyapati. His *Panchasayaka* (Pañcasāyaka) is a verse epitome of erotics in five parts, occasionally endowed with poetic and lyrical beauty. His *Muditaprahasana* is a farce in three acts.

With black bees humming in the grove of freshly-blossomed  
malli-flowers,  
With pollen dust emanating from the row of blossomed mango-trees,  
With the happy cuckoo striking sweet and auspicious notes in its throat,  
This spring season enthrals even the minds of seers.

O young lady with arms soft like lotus petals,  
O violently passionate lady with a severe face !  
Cast your glances on me. This poor ascetic, enticed by your face.  
Is already drowning in the sea of passion.

My heart is aching, my mind is reeling  
And the joints of bones in my body are cracking.  
O all-destroyer, keep off this evil design.  
Alas ! it seems my life is coming to an end.

From *Dhurtasamagama*, 14th century

Tr. by Trilokanath Jha

## Selections

### VIDYAPATI

1<sup>n</sup>

## The Testing of Men

PURUSHAPARIKSHA (Puruṣaparīkṣā) is a collection of 42 tales, by Vidyapati (Vidyāpati, 14th century), who belonged to the Mithila region in Eastern India. Better known for his exquisite lyrics in Maithili, Vidyapati was a versatile author and made his debut in Sanskrit and Avahatta or the later form of Apabhramsha also.

The short stories of *Purushapariksha* evince a rare skill of weaving fascinating tales. Some of them are related to folk traditions. All are pervaded with a subtle sense of humour and irony. *Kirtipataka* is a collection of hymns by Vidyapati.

*Alasakatha* or the story of the lethargic men. Given here, is the sixteenth story in the anthology.

There was a minister called Viresvara in Mithila. Being very generous and compassionate by nature, he distributed food to the distressed daily. He also gave clothes and other things, to the lethargic, because,

Foremost amongst all the distressed  
is the one who is lethargic.  
For he will not move a little  
even when tormented by hunger.

Owing to the generosity of the minister, several lethargic men got a well-provided place to live in. Noticing this, many of the fat-bellied also got mixed with the group. Seeing the trouble-free life of the lethargic men over there, these rogues pretended lethargy and got food. Thus the expenditure on the home for the lethargic increased enormously. The caretakers employed there conferred with each other: "Our master has made the provision only for the lethargic, but those who are not really lethargic are getting benefit of it through deception. It will be our failure if this is allowed to continue. The wealth of our master should not be wasted. So we will examine the real lethargic ones of the lot".

After this discussion, the caretakers set the house on fire and began to watch secretly. Seeing that the fire was increasing, all the rogues fled away. After that, those who were less lethargic also left the place. Only four persons ultimately remained. Negotiations proceeded between them in the following manner:

One of them, with his face all covered with a cloth, asked : "Hey, why all this noise ?"

"It seems that this house has caught fire," said the other. The third man remarked: "Is there no pious man who could vanquish this fire by covering it with wet clothes or blankets ?"

The fourth man then bewailed, 'O how talkative you are ! Why don't you people keep quiet?

Listening to their conversation, and finding them engulfed in fire, the caretakers rushed and dragged them out of the house, catching them by their hair.

Thereafter pointing to these four, they remarked :

The husband protects the wife,  
A mother protects her child.

But who would protect a lethargic man  
Except the one who is compassionate.

Soon thereafter, the minister enhanced the grant for the four real lethargic men.

From *Alasakatha, Purushapariksha*, 14th century

Tr. by  
Radhavallabh Tripathi

*ii*

The following are some of the *Subhashitas* or wise sayings from the *Testing of Men*.

*1*

A coward is never free from fear even if he is hidden in the cave of a mountain, or is encompassed by crores of soldiers or has crossed the seven seas.

*2*

Poverty initiates sin, causes to feel pain and commit theft, teaches crookedness, causes to utter pitiable words and to place the begging bowl before the ignoble. Oh, what does not poverty cause us to do !

*3*

Like poetry some ladies are lovely only in speech, some only in substance, whereas others are lovely both in speech and substance.

*4*

A pleased father gives away all his belongings to his sons but even he cannot give them intelligence and change their destiny.

*5*

An employee serves a king for the whole of his life carefully but if he becomes careless even for a moment, the king, if he does not take his life, takes his wealth like an adversary.

6

What cannot that great man, the lion among human beings, conquer, if he conquered pride in affluence and amorous passion in youth.

From *Subhashita, Purushapariksha*, 14th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

2

### Hymns

The following are invocations to Goddess Sarasvati, Lord Ganesha and Lord Shiva.

May this Goddess Sarasvati, resembling the garland of *malati*-flowers placed on the neck and showing drops of *rasa*<sup>1</sup> reside in my heart.

I offer my salutation to Ganesha, who has the face of an elephant with a single tusk and who wards off catastrophes just as the high-pitched sound of the wag of his ears wards off bees.

May the erotic Lord Shiva, having a digit of the moon on his crest, the lovely form of his loved Parvati forming half of his body beneath the dangling matted locks of hairs, protect you all daily, with a smile on his face, having entered the meeting-grove, out of curiosity to meet his beloved although she forms part of his own body in the *Ardhanarisvara* form.

From *Kirtipataka*, 14th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Wishing-Stone of Narratives

MERUTUNGACHARYA

PRABANDHACHINTAMANI (Prabandhacintāmani) by Merutungacharya (Merutuṅgācārya, 14th century) is a prose-tale in five *prakashas* containing several *prabandhas* or stories of great historical importance. The work was completed in 1306 by a Jain mendicant.

### Invocation

May the Jina Rishabha, the divine son of Nabhi, the  
Parameshthin, who makes an end of births,

1. Poetic sentiment.

Protect the four gates of the glorious goddess of speech,  
 which become her, in that she has four mouths.  
 I meditate on that spiritual preceptor, the lord Chandraprabha,<sup>1</sup>  
 who is made up of accomplishments, as the moon is made up of digits,  
 Whose hand melts stone-like men, as the ray of the moon melts stones.

After turning over many collections, Merutunga makes this book  
 From the prose narratives therein contained, for the easy comprehension  
 of the wise.

Moreover, when I was desirous of extracting this  
 Prabandhachintamani,  
 From the tradition of sound spiritual teachers, as from a mine of jewels,  
 The reverend Dharmadeva assisted me in it,  
 By means of narratives hundred times repeated.

The reverend Ganin Gunachandra produced the first copy of the  
 Prabandhachintamani,  
 A new book, as pleasing as the Mahabharata.

Ancient stories, because they have been So often heard,  
 Do not delight so much the minds of the wise,  
 Therefore I compose this Prabandhachintamani book  
 Out of the life-histories of men not far removed from my own time.

Although narratives, which the wise relate  
 Each according to their own mind, must necessarily differ in character,  
 Still, as this book is put together from a good tradition,  
 The discreet should not indulge in cavilling with regard to it.

### The History of Vikramarka

Vikramarka, though of the lowest rank, became foremost on the face of  
 this earth by his virtues,—

By courage, generosity and other graces, an incomparable lord of earth.

At the beginning of my book I give a slight sketch of the history of that  
 king,

Like a nectar-infusion in the ear of the listener, abridging it greatly, though  
 a vast theme. •

1 The Name of the eighth Tirthankara.

Thus runs the tale :—

In the country of Avanti, in the city called Supratishthana, there was a Rajput named Vikrama, full of courage and other virtues, an incomparable treasure-house of unrivalled daring, endowed with god-like marks. Now this man, though afflicted with poverty from his birth, was devoted to policy and when he did not obtain wealth even by more than thousand devices, he, once on a time, set out for the Rohana mountain in company with a friend named Bhattamatra. When they approached it, they rested in the house of a potter, in a city called Pravara, near the mountain. When Bhattamatra, the next morning, asked the potter for a pickaxe, he said, "Any man in low circumstances, who goes into the middle of this mine, and hearing in the morning unwelcome news, touches his forehead with his hand, and exclaims, 'Alas, Destiny !' and then strikes a blow, obtains whatever jewels may turn up." Bhattamatra, having thoroughly ascertained this fact from the potter, took those tools with him, and when Vikrama was standing in the mine, ready to strike, in order to obtain jewels, being unable to induce him to assume the requisite despondency by any other method, he said to him, "A certain stranger has come from Ujjayini, and when he was asked for news of the welfare of those at home, he said that your mother was dead." When Vikrama heard that intelligence, which was like a red-hot diamond needle, he struck his forehead with the palm of his hand, and exclaiming, "Alas, Destiny !" he flung the pickaxe from his grasp. When the ground was torn up by the point of the pickaxe, a gleaming jewel, worth a lac and a quarter, sprang to light. Bhattamatra took the jewel and returned with Vikrama. In order to remove the danger of the dart of his friend's grief, Bhattamatra told him at the time the secret of the mine, and also the fact that his mother was in perfect health. Thinking that covetousness was bred in the bone of Bhattamatra, Vikrama flew into a passion, and tearing the jewel from his hand, he returned to the mouth of the mine. He exclaimed,—

Curse on the Rohana mountain, that heals the wound of the poverty  
of the wretched !

Which gives jewels to petitioners, on their exclaiming.

"Alas, Destiny !"

After uttering these words, he flung down the jewel in that very mine, in the sight of all the people, and wandering off to another country he reached the environs of Avanti. Having heard the sound of a shrill drum, and having ascertained the whole secret, he kept quiet about it, and entered the palace simultaneously with the drum. The ministers installed him as king, in that very *muhurta*, without inquiring whether it was favourable or not, after twenty-four hours' interval. Owing to his sagacity, O king sagat, he said to himself, "Some mighty demon or god is angry with this kingdom, and kills one king every day, and as there is no king, wastes the realm. So by fair or foul means



I must win him over". So he had prepared various kinds of viands and delicacies, and having arranged them all at night-fall in an upper room of the palace, he went there immediately after the evening ceremony of waving lights before the idol, surrounded by his guards, and placed a bolster covered with his own turban and garments on a swinging bed which was suspended from the ceiling by chains, while he himself, excelling in valour the three worlds, stood, sword in hand, in a part of the room not lit up by the lamp. While he remained gazing into the air, in the very dead of the night he beheld entering by way of the window first a smoke, then a flame, then a terrible vampire, looking like the visible embodiment of the ruler of the dead; and he, with belly pinched with hunger, having enjoyed to his full those delicacies, and having nointed his body with the sweet-smelling substances, and being pleased by tasting the betel, sat down on that bed and said to Vikrama, "Mortal, my name is Agnivetala, and I am well known as the doorkeeper of the king of the gods I kill one king every day. However, being pleased with this devotion on your part, I grant you your life and give you the kingdom, but you must always provide for me the same amount of viands and delicacies." When both had agreed to this compact, after the lapse of some time, King Vikrama asked the Vetala the length of his own life. The Vetala said, "I do not know, but I will ask my master and inform you." Having said this, he departed. He came again on another night and said to Vikrama, "The great Indra says that you will live for one hundred years exactly." The king urged strongly the obligations of friendship and entreated him earnestly, that he would induce Indra to make the hundred years shorter or longer by one year. He promised to do so, but returned and said, "The great Indra will not consent to make your life ninety-nine or one hundred and one years." When the king heard this decision, he ordered the customary viands and delicacies not to be cooked for the next day, and remained at night ready to do battle. Thereupon the vampire came there the next night according to previous custom, and said the same thing to the king, and not seeing those viands and other luxuries, objurgated him. Then a single combat took place between them, and lasted for a long time but at last the king, by the help of his own good actions in a previous state of existence, beat the vampire down to the ground and putting his foot upon his heart, he said to him, "Call to mind your favourite deity." The vampire answered the king, "I am delighted with this marvellous daring on your part, and you may consider that you have won over me, the vampire named Agnivetala, as a slave to execute all your commands." So Vikrama's kingdom became free from enemies. In this way he brought into subjection to himself the territories of ninety-six rival monarchs, conquering by his prowess the whole circle of the regions.

O Sahasanka, the wild elephant of the woods, approaching the palaces of thy enemies,

And beholding afar, in that part of their walls which is made of crystal, his own reflected image,

Thinking it a rival elephant, smites it in wrath, and breaking his tusk, looks again,

And then slowly, slowly strokes it, thinking it a female of his own race.

### A Cowherd Transformed as Kalidasa

In the city of Avanti lived Priyangumanjari, the daughter of King Vikramaditya. She was made over to a pandit named Vararuchi for the purpose of study, and, owing to her cleverness, she learnt the shastras from him in a few days. She was in the prime of youth, and remained continually gratifying her father. One day in the season of spring, when she was sitting on a sofa in the window at the time of mid-day, when the sun was scorching men's foreheads, she saw her teacher coming along in the road; and when he had rested the shade of the window, she said to him, showing him some mango fruits mellow with ripeness, and knowing that he longed for them, "Would you like to have these fruits warm or cold?" He, not seeing the real cunning of her question, answered, "I should like to have them warm." Thereupon, she threw them sideways into the corner of his garment, which he held out to receive them. They fell on the ground, and were consequently covered with dust. So the pandit took them in his two palms, and proceeded to remove the dust by blowing upon them. While he was doing this, the princess said to him tauntingly, "What, are these fruits too hot, that you cool them with your breath?" That Brahmin, being annoyed by her taunting speech, said to her, "Ah ! young woman, you fancy that you are very clever, but as you choose to cavil at your teacher, may you have a herdsman for a husband !" When she heard this curse of his, she uttered the following vow, "Whoever is your supreme preceptor through excelling you in knowledge, though you do know the three Vedas, that man I will marry." Then, as king Vikrama was whelmed in a sea of anxiety with regard to finding a distinguished youth who would be a suitable match for her. Once upon a time that pandit, by order of the king, who had become impatient for the pointing out of the desired bride-groom, entered a large forest, and was afflicted with excessive thirst. As no water appeared in any direction, seeing a herdsman he asked him for water. The herdsman, as he had no water to give, said, "Drink milk," and then told him to make a *karavadi*. When the pandit heard this term, which of all terms he had never heard before in his life, his mind was devoured by bewilderment. But the herdsman put his hand on the pandit's head, and

placed him under a buffalo-cow, and then having induced the pandit to put the palms of his hands together, so as to form what is called a *karavadi*, he made him drink milk till his throat was filled. The pandit considered the herdsman as good as his preceptor, because he placed his hand on his head and taught him the specific term *karavadi*, and thought that he would be a fitting bridegroom for the princess. So he made him leave the buffalo-cow, and brought him to his own palace; and for six months made him cultivate his person, and repeat the formula of blessing, "Om namah Shivaya!" After six months he found that those syllables were well impressed on the surface of his throat, so in a fortunate *muhurta* he conducted him to the court of the king, after he had been suitably adorned. The herdsman was so bewildered by the sight of the court, that when he tried to address to the king the formula of blessing he had carefully practised, he brought out the syllables, "Usharata." When the king was puzzled with the herdsman's stammering utterance, the pandit, wishing to have him credited with a cleverness he did not possess, said, "May Rudra together with Uma, bestowing blessings, trident in hand,

Elated with the might of his shout, protect thee, O lord of the Earth !"

By understanding this couplet to be intended, he interpreted in diffuse language the depth of the herdsman's learning. The king, pleased with this satisfactory evidence of the herdsman's learning, had him married to his daughter. In accordance with the advice of the pandit, the herdsman preserved unbroken silence; but the princess, wishing to test his cleverness, entreated him to revise a newly-written book. He placed the book in the palm of his hand, and with a nail-parer proceeded to remove from the letters in it the dots and the oblique lines at the top indicating vowels, and thus to isolate them, and then the princess discovered that he was a cowherd. After that the son-in-law's revision became a proverb everywhere. Once on a time they pointed out to him a herd of buffalo-cows in a picture painted on a wall. In his delight he forgot his high rank, and uttered the barbarous words made use of for calling buffalo-cows. So it was ascertained for certain that he was a keeper of buffalo-cows. The herdsman, reflecting on that contempt, which the princess showed towards him, began to propitiate the goddess Kali in order to attain learning. The king, being afraid that his daughter would be left a widow, sent a female slave in disguise at night, and when she woke him up and said to him "I am pleased with you," the goddess Kali herself, apprehending that some disaster would take place, appeared in visible form and granted his request. When the princess heard of that occurrence she was delighted, and came there and said, "Is there any special utterance"? He thereupon, having become known by the name of Kalidasa, composed the three Mahakavyas, the Kumara Sambhava, and so on, and six other works.

### The Man of Gold

Once upon a time a merchant named Danta, who lived in King Vikramaditya's city, came to him as he was in his hall of audience, with a present in his hand, and, bowing low, said to him, "King, in a lucky *muhurta* I had a palace built by distinguished master-builders, and I went into it with great rejoicings but, while I was lying there on my bed at night, half asleep and half awake, I suddenly heard a voice say, 'I am about to fall.' I was bewildered with fear, and exclaiming, 'Do not fall,' I immediately made my escape. I have been to no purpose molested by the astrologers, who have had to do with this mansion, and by the architects, in the form of contributions, such as seasonable complimentary presents, and so on. Now it remains for your majesty to decide what should be done." When the king had carefully considered the account given by the merchant, he paid him the three lakhs which he fixed as the price of that splendid mansion, and, after the general assembly of the evening. King Vikrama slept comfortably in that palace which he had made his own. When he heard that same voice say, "I am falling," he, being a man of unrivalled daring, said, "Fall quickly," and so he obtained a man of gold that fell near him.

### Bhartrhari

Then, in the city of Avanti, a certain Brahmin, who was employed in teaching the grammar of Panini, and had taken a vow to prostrate himself before the image of Ganesha on the banks of the Shipra, that fulfilled men's desires like a wishing-stone, being worried by his pupils with questions about the explanation of grammatical theses and so on, one day in the rainy season, when the swollen current of the river was flowing onward, jumped into it, and by good luck came in contact with a tree, and supporting himself by placing his hand on its root, reached a boat, and worshipped Ganesha face to face. The god was pleased with his daring, and said to him, "Choose a boon". He asked that he might be instructed in Panini, and the god consented, and giving him a piece of chalk, explained to him the grammar daily. The grammar was thoroughly considered at the end of six months, and then the Brahmin at once bade adieu to Ganesha, and taking with him the first copy of his work, entered that city, and sat down on the open space in front of a certain house and went to sleep. Then, the next morning, a hetaera, being informed of that circumstance by her maids, who found him in such a condition, made them bring him, and placed him on a swing-bed. At the end of three days and three nights he shook off his sleep to a certain extent, and looking at the wonderful pictures of the picture-gallery and other rooms, he thought that he had been born into the heavenly-world, but he was informed of the real state of affairs by the *hetaera*. She satisfied him with a bath, food and drink,

and other attentions, and he went to the king's audience-hall and explained correctly the grammar of Panini. He was liberally rewarded by the king and all the other learned men, and he gave to that *hetæra* all the wealth that he received from them.

Then he had successively four wives, belonging to four castes. Now the son of the kshatriya wife was Vikramaditya, but the son of the Shudra wife was Bhartrhari. The latter was secretly taught in a cellar on account of his being of inferior cast, but the others were made to study openly. Accordingly, they were being instructed in communication with Bhartrhari, and the following line was being read out :

Charity, enjoyment and waste are the three destinations of wealth.

Bhartrhari, as the usual communication was not made by the string, and the three other pupils, who were openly taught, asked for the second half of the couplet, became angry, and scolded the teacher, saying, "What, you son of a concubine, do you not even now make the necessary communication by means of the string ?" Then he appeared in person, and blamed the writer of the treatise, saying:

Of wealth acquired by a hundred exertions, dearer even than life,  
Charity only is the destination, the others are deviations.

Giving this version, he expressed his opinion that there was only one destination for wealth. That Bhartrhari wrote many books, the *vairagyashataka* and others.

### Vagbhata

Then the ornament of the country of Malava, king Bhoja in Dhara, had a certain physician well-read in medical treatises, named Vagbhata. He made use of all the unwholesome things mentioned in the medical treatises, and so produced diseases, and then employed to check them the remedies and diets famous in Shushruta, and so cured them. He then until to try how long one could live without water, so he abstained from water, so he abstained from water, but at the end of three days his palate and lips were tormented with thirst, so he recited the following couplet:

Sometimes hot, sometimes cold, sometimes boiled and left to cool,  
Sometimes mixed with medicine, water in no case is forbidden.

Such was the saying in praise of water that he uttered. He wrote a treatise named Vagbhata, with reference to his own experience. His son-in-law, the younger Bahada, went with his father-in-law, the elder Bahada, to the king's palace in the early morning. After examining the appearance of the king's body, the elder Bahada said, "To-day you are free from disease."

But king Bhoja observed a certain alteration in the features of the younger Bahada, and asked him the reason. He said, "To-day, at the end of night, consumption will enter the king's body, for this is indicated by the appearance of a dark shade." In these words he revealed, by the inspiration of a deity, a process that could not be detected by the senses. The king, astonished at the wide range of his acquirements, questioned him about the means of checking that disease, when he mentioned an elixir that cost three lakhs. That elixir was prepared in six months at the cost of so much money, with great care, and at the nightfall the physician put it in a glass phial and laid it on the king's bed. In the morning the king wished to take that elixir after worshipping the divinity, and after the joyful ceremony of adoring the elixir was completed, and all the necessary preparations had been made, that younger physician, for some reason or other, dashed the glass phial on the ground and broke it. The king said, "Alas! what is the meaning of this?" The physician said, "The disease has been driven away by the mere smell of the elixir, and as there is no disease, what is the good of exhibiting without cause this medicine that consumes the elements of the body, since to-day, at the end of night, that dark shade that I spoke of before, has been seen to have abandoned the king's body, and to have gone far off. In this matter the decision rests with the king." The king was pleased with this assurance of his truthfulness, and gave him a present that chased away poverty. Then all those diseases, being extirpated from the earth by that physician, went to heaven and told the two physicians, the sons of Ashvini, how shamefully they had been treated. Then those two Ashvins, being astonished in their minds at that intelligence, took the form of a pair of blue birds, and sat on a turret underneath the window of the palace of Vagbhata, that champion who warred against disease, and made this sound, "Who is free from disease?" Then that man skilled in the science of a medicine, having long reflected in his mind on that significant sound which they made in his vicinity, said:

He who does not eat green herbs, who eats *ghee* with rice,  
 Who is addicted to milk-fluids, who does not eat with water,  
 Who does not eat at all, who does not eat harmful hot things,  
 Who snatches a meal while walking, who eats what he can  
 digest, who eats in small quantity.

After he had said this, those two went away astonished in mind; but on the second day they assumed for the second time the forms of such birds, and, making the same sound as before, they came to the house of the physician. Again they spoke, and the answer came as follows:

He who remains quiet in the rainy season, drinks in the autumn, eats in the cold and dewy seasons,  
 Rejoices in the spring, sleeps in the hot season, he is free from disease,  
 O bird.

When he had said this, they went away again. On the third day they assumed the form of mighty hermits and came to his house. Their utterance was:

Not sprung from the earth, not of the ether, not animal, not sprung from the water,

Say, physician, what is the medicine approved by all the treatises?

Again the physician gave an answer:

Not sprung from the earth, not of the ether, wholesome, free from taste,

Abstinence is the sovereign medicine mentioned by ancient teachers.

The divine physicians were astonished in mind at this, and they showed themselves in their true form, and after giving him the boon that he chose, they went to their own place.

### The Story of Purpose

Then, once on a time, Shiva was asked by Bhavani, "To how many pilgrims do you give a kingdom?" When she said this he answered, "I will give a kingdom to that man who, alone of men a hundred thousand in number, adheres to his purpose." In order to prove the truth of this by example, he turned Bhavani into an old cow stuck in the mire, and himself stood by her on the firm soil, in the form of a man, and called to the travellers to pull her out. They, being eager to visit the neighbouring shrine of Someshvara, laughed him to scorn. At last a compassionate party of travellers began the task of pulling her out, but Shiva assumed the form of a lion, and chased them away. However, one traveller, even preferring death, would not leave the site of that cow. He was selected and shown to Bhavani as worthy of a throne.

### The Story of Compassion

Then a certain pilgrim, going on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Someshvara, slept on the way in the house of a worker in iron. The wife of that worker in iron killed her husband, and placed the sword at the head of the pilgrim, and raised the hue and cry. A watchman came there and cut off the hands of that supposed guilty person. He began to exclaim against the god, but the god appeared to him in the night and said to him, "Hear the story of your former life. Once on a time, a she-goat was held by the ears by one brother with his hands, while the other brother killed it. Then that she-goat after death became this woman, while the man who killed the she-goat became in this life her husband: Because on that occasion you held her ears, therefore, on meeting her again you have had your hands cut off, so how can you reproach me?"

Of old time, in the city of Shankhapura, there was a king named Shankha. In that city there was a merchant, who both in name and deed. was Dhanada. He, once on a time, reflected that fortune is as unsteady as the flapping ears of an elephant, so he went with a present in his hand to the king and pleased him, and on a piece of land granted by him he caused to be built, after consultation with his four sons, a Jaina temple in an auspicious conjunction. After he had erected the images that were to be set up there, he made many doors of approach for the service of that temple, and being anxious about its ritual, he had laid out a charming garden adorned with a number of flowering trees of various kinds, and appointed people to look after it. The merchant's impeding works in former births began to reveal themselves, and so he gradually found his wealth diminish, and he observed that in that city his reputation was tarnished by his indebtedness; so he settled in a certain village at no great distance from the town, and his sons gained subsistence for him by going to and from between the village and the town. In this way he spend some time. Then, on another occasion, when the festival, that takes place once in four months, was approaching, Dhanada went to Shankhapura with his sons, who were in the habit of going there, and as he was ascending the steps of his own temple, the woman, whose business it was to pick flowers in his own garden, presented him with a fourfold flower-garland. He was filled with great joy, and worshipped the mighty Jina with those flowers. In the night he was complaining bitterly of his bad circumstances to his spritual guide, so he gave him a charm for attracting the Yaksha Kapardin. Once on a time, he made use of that very charm on the fourteenth day of the black fortnight, and made the Yaksha Kapardin appear, and then by the advice of the spiritual guide, he asked that Yaksha to bestow on him the fruit of the merit he had gained by offering a fourfold flower-garland on the occasion of the four-monthly festival. The Yaksha answered, "I am not able to give the fruit of the merit of even one flower offered in worship, without the permission of the All-knowing one." But the Yaksha Kapardin, as he felt extraordinary affection for his co-religionist, buried in the four corners of his house four pitchers full of gold, and then disappeared. The next morning Dhanada came to his house, and made over that wealth to his sons, who were disposed to speak evil of the Jaina religion. They eagerly inquired of their father the cause of his obtaining that wealth, and in order to manifest in their hearts the power of religion, he informed them that wealth had been bestowed upon him, owing to the power of worship paid to the Jina, by-the Yaksha Kapardin, whom he had thereby gratified. They, having attained wealth, returned to the city in which they were born, and being devoted to the service of their own religious edifice, and engaged in propagating the



law of the Jina in many various ways, they firmly established the Jaina religion even in the minds of people of alien faiths.

From *Prabandhachintamani*, 14th century

Tr. by C.H. Tawney

## Lord Krishna

HARSHA THAKKURA

The verses of Harsha Thakkura (Harṣa Ṭhakkura, 14th-15th century) are cited in *Rasarnava* (Rasārṇava) of Shankara Mishra the 15th century.

Though present in the fore-front itself on all sides, he does not form an object of vision. Though seated in the heart, he is not susceptible to touch by the hand, O confidante! what a unique form of Lord Krishna is this !

From *Kavyapradipa*, 14th-15th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Fool's Paradise

ANONYMOUS

*The Fool's Paradise* is a story gleaned from *Bharatakadvātrimsika*, a collection of 32 tales of the *Bharatakas* written by an unnamed Jaina monk, who heard these tales from his teacher Sadhuraja. The Bharatakas were supposed to have lived a life of renunciation. They were subjected to mockery because of their excessive simplicity or foolishness and the stories about their so-called foolish behaviour might have come into vogue during the medieval period.

*Bharatakadvātrimsika* furnishes the rare specimen of fool's tales from India. The following piece "The Fool's Paradise" is the 19th story in the collection.

There was a hermit called Karamanda in the village Sohala. He had two disciples. Once on a rainy night when the sky was covered with clouds and there was lightning in the clouds, these disciples began to quarrel like this :

One of them said : "Hey, look ! The sky has caught fire, and the flames are visible." The second one remarked, "Don't tell lies. This is a cart with a heater in it and it is moving to arm all those who are suffering from cold."

They debated on this point for long, and ultimately approached their teacher and placed their doubts before him.

"O master, what is that in the sky ?" they asked.

The guru looked at the sky. He also did not know what it actually was. So he fabricated something, and told them: "O disciples, this is neither fire nor a

cart. It is actually the sun peeping out of the clouds again and again. He wants to know whether it has dawned or not. If it has dawned, then I must rise; if it has not, then I must not."

In this way the guru resolved the quarrel between his disciples.

From *Bharatakadvatimsika*, 15th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## The Defeat of the God of Love

NAGADEVA

NAGADEVA (Nāgadeva, 15th century) who subscribed to the Jaina tradition is the author of the interesting allegorical tale *Madanaparajaya* (Madanaparājaya) written in simple and lucid prose. It narrates the episode of the defeat of the god of love, known as Madana, Makaradhvaja, etc. All the characters in this tale are symbolic, but they are portrayed with great sensitiveness and understanding of human nature. the narrative is marked by intense intrigue and tussle.

The portion given here from *Madanaparajaya* records the beginning of the battle between Madana and Jina.

There is a famous city called Bhava or the world; a king name Makaradhvaja rules there. He always bears his bow and arrow, with which he controls all the gods and even the chief of gods, Indra, all the humans and the chief of humans, all the serpents and the chief of serpents, and so on. He has in fact vanquished all the three worlds. He is very young and handsome, very powerful and generous, and given to worldly pleasures. He has been performing his royal duties together with his two wives called Rati or physical intimacy and Priti or love and a Chief Minister called Moha or infatuation.

Honoured by his followers and the three Pains, three acute Desires, three Punishments, eight Actions, eighteen Defaults, the Bonds, Intoxication, carelessness, Bad result, Lack of restraint and the seven Calamities, he actually appears to be a god.

Once in the assembly of his followers, kings and men, he asked his minister Moha : "O Moha ! what news in all the three worlds have you come across ?"

Moha answered : "O Lord, I have come across a strange item of news, which I would like to tell you privately".

The king retires to listen to him. Mohamalla told him, "O Lord, Sajjvalana has just sent his brief. You must be very attentive to it". Having said this, Moha handed over a note in the hand of King Makaradhvaja.

Reading the note, the king became pensive and worried and said:

"Moha, I am hearing this for the first time in my life. My heart tells me that it cannot be true, because I have already won all the worlds. Who is this king called Jina beyond the three worlds ? It is simply impossible !"

Having listened to the king, Moha remarked: "O Lord, I am afraid the news is true. Sajjvalana will never furnish wrong information. And also, O Lord, why do you forget that Jinaraja ? He used to dwell in this very city of Bhava in the hermitage of the prostitute called Durgati (plight) and was engaged in stealing our wealth. The sergeant death again and again killed and enlivened him. Then finally he got disenchanted with Durgati, fell upon the treasure which we have only heard of; took away three precious jewels and enormous wealth from there; left his house and his wives and riding the horse called Please, he reached the city of Character. The Warriors of Worldly Pleasures and the Warriors of Sensuous Organs could not overcome him. The city of Character is protected by five great warriors. These warriors found Jina equipped with three precious jewels and the wealth, so they thought he is fit to rule the city of Character. They offered him the kingdom of penance. There, in the province of Character, rules Jina. His fortress is well guarded and is equipped with stairs of virtues and morality. He is very happy there, and also O Lord, now his subjects are celebrating a great event, as Jina is just going to be married and the marriage ceremony will be performed in the city of salvation !

*Madanaparajaya*, 15th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## The Ocean of Aesthetic Pleasure

SHANKARA MISHRA

SHANKARA MISHRA (Śaṅkara Miśra, 15th century), son of Bhavanatha, is the author of *Rasamava* (a work on poetics), *Shrikrishnavinoda* and a *Monobhavaprabhava* (plays), and *Guridigambaraprahasana* (a farce). He is not the same as the author of *Rasamanjari*, a commentary on Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*.

What a moon is this that rises among golden creepers ? It is not the left-over spit out by the gods, not eclipsed by the bite of Rahu, not touched by any blackspot, not oppressed by the sun, not wiped out by the new moon night and not compared with the face of a young lady. (1.64)

In old age sons, wife and full-brothers and the like generally become independent and go out of control. O my body ! you have been nourished from my very birth and are always carefully looked after; how is it that you also go out of control ? (V.275)

O black bee ! You spent your day in the abode of the lotus; during the night you remained deeply attached to your beloved water-lily. Tell us frankly where did you get more pleasure: in the former or in the latter ?

(III.161)

O Swan ! you roam about several times in many ponds; while on your move you tour a large number of rivers. I ask you as a friend: tell me where is water most tasty, pure, fragrant, cool and deep ?

(III.145)

The female *chakravaka*-bird, tightly holding in her beak the juicy lotus-stalk, left over by her lover the previous day after tasting, searching for her lover on one river-side or the other, from the evening onwards and depressed by separation, feels the pain, her eyes fixed on the eastern horizon waiting eagerly for the sun to come out.

This male deer removes the itch of his beloved with the tip of his horn and she, afflicted by the arrows of the god of love, sniffs at his mouth. Uniting their bodies in close embrace they sleep at ease. Oh ! the naturally beautiful conjugal love of the deer gives pleasure.

From *Rasarnava*, 15th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Heavenly Flower of Aesthetic Pleasure

GANAPATI

GANAPATI (Gaṇapati, 15th century) is an author whose verses are quoted in Bhanudatta's *Rasaparijata*.

May Shiva who, for long infatuated,  
Takes from his body reflected on Kailasa,  
And offers to the repeatedly-smiling Parvati  
For her make-up  
The disc of the moon for a garland of *malli flowers*,  
The lustre of his neck for collyrium  
And the flame of his third eye for vermillion—  
May He protect you all !

From *Rasaparijata*, 15th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Light of Poesy

GOVINDA THAKKURA

GOVINDA THAKKURA (Govinda Thakkura, 15th century), son of Keshava Thakkura,

has written *Adhikaranamala* (on *Mimamsa* philosophy) *Udaharanadeepika* or *Slokadeepika* (a commentary on *Kavyaprakasa*, an 11th century treatise on Sanskrit poetics by Mammatacharya) and *Poojapradeepika* (manual for the worship of Rama).

The moon is the disc of the god of love, the flower-archer, shining in the middle of the sky, the swan appearing at the bank of the heavenly river Mandakini, the white lotus fallen from the ear of the celestial beauty walking swiftly in the dusk. (p.16)

"O foolish lady ! why do you feel sad ? O beloved ! I shall come back in a few days; come, place ceremonial pitchers all around for my farewell." The husband having said thus, the wife, after taking a long breath, took the ceremonial pitcher in her hand, filled with the tears from her eyes. (p.79)

From *Kavyapradipa*, 15th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Marriage of Parvati

VAMANA BANABHATTA

The author, VAMANA BANABHATTA (Vāmana Bāṇabhatta, 15th century) was a court poet of Peda Komati Vemabhupala, king of Kondavidu, who reigned from 1403 to 1420. Among the works of this Bana are: *Nalabhyudaya* (a poem in eight cantos), *Raghunathacharita* (a poem in thirty cantos), *Hamsasandesha* (poem), *Vemabhupalacharita* (a poem), *Parvatiparinaya* (a play), *Shringarabhushanabhana* (play), *Kanakalekha* (a play in four acts), *Brihatkathamajari* (prose fiction; only the portion of *Kadambari* is now extant). He also compiled two lexicons—*Shabdachandrika* and *Shabdaratnakari*.

*Parvatiparinaya* is a five-act play based on Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati. The play begins with Sage Narada arriving at Himavan's place, as a result of which Parvati takes offering to Lord Shiva who has been doing penance on that mountain itself. In the second act, the destruction caused by Taraka is reported. It is said that the son of Parvati and Shiva would be the annihilator of Taraka. In the third act, the god of love is burned to ashes by Shiva. The fourth act depicts Shiva in the guise of a hermit come to test the loyalty and devotion of Parvati, and after being impressed with her qualities, he proposes marriage to Parvati.

The fifth act describes the marriage ceremony: the city being decorated for the wedding, the arrival of the distinguished guests, the bridal make-up of Parvati and finally the wedding rites being performed.

### Act One

(*Enters Narada*)

NARADA : Alas ! since my birth I have never been able to refrain from getting

myself involved in the affairs of gods. Even now, I am going to Aushadhiprastha for the purpose of creating a favourable climate for the marriage of Shiva and Parvati. After leaving the house of her father who had humiliated her husband, the daughter of Daksha is reborn as Gauri in the house of the King of Mountains. Shankara is also doing penance on the same mountain.

*(Acts as if entering and looking in front of him.)* The sky-scraping city gate of the large palace of Himavan looks like the star-studded sky. Himavan is inside the palace, conversing with Queen Mena Devi. This is the right time to put forth my proposal.

*(Goes round the stage).*

*(Enters Himavan accompanied by Mena and servants)*

HIMAVAN : Beloved, being the father of a daughter causes great sorrow for a familyman. Now our daughter Gauri, the ornament of our entire family, has reached the age of marriage.

MENA : I too cannot concentrate on anything because of the ever-present thought of her marriage.

HIMAVAN : *(Looking in front)* Beloved, Sage Narada is coming. Arrange for the offerings.

Mena: As you command.

HIMAVAN : *(Rising with folded hands)* I greet you, my Lord. What is the purpose of your honouring this servant of yours in such a way?

NARADA : You had two extremely beautiful daughters named Ganga and Gauri. Ganga is married to the worthy king of the seas. But whom do you consider as worthy of your younger daughter?

HIMAVAN : This matter is causing me great worry.

NARADA : I cannot think of any naga<sup>1</sup>, human being, or god worthy of your daughter. Only Lord Shankara, who has no equal in this universe, is worthy of marrying your extra-ordinarily beautiful daughter. At present he is doing penance on the peaks of your ranges. So arrange for some religious services to please him.

HIMAVAN : What type of service do you have in mind?

NARADA : Ask your daughter to go with her loyal friends to the Lord to make offering to him.

HIMAVAN : What is necessary shall be done.

NARADA : *(Aside)* I have sowed the seed. *(Loudly)* I am leaving.

## Act Two

MEHENDRA : *(Looking at the door)* Who is there?

DEVANANDI : *(Entering)* My Lord, it is I.

**MEHENDRA :** We have to ponder over a serious matter. So do not allow anybody, except Brihaspati, to enter.

**DEVANANDI :** As you command.

*(Exits.)*

*(Enters Brihaspati)*

**BRIHASPATI :** *(Looking in front)* Mahendra is sitting all alone. He looks greatly worried.

**MAHENDRA :** *(On seeing Brihaspati)* Please take a seat.

**DEVANANDI :** *(Entering)* My Lord, Devala, the messenger of the gods, is here. What should I do ?

**MAHENDRA :** Let him enter alone.

*(Enters Devala)*

**DEVALA :** Victory be to my Lord !

**MAHENDRA :** Devala, why do you look so dejected ?

**DEVALA :** I have to bring to your notice the sufferings caused by the menace of the evil demons. They have gone on a rampage in our Nandana garden. They have uprooted many trees and lotus shrubs. Now they are getting ready to grab fearlessly the hair of the ladies of heaven.

**MAHENDRA :** Devala, do not entertain any fears. My thunderbolt, combined with the boon given to us by Brahma, will put an end to Tarakasura. Only we have to wait for some time. So, go back in peace and do your duty.

*(Exits Devala)*

**MAHENDRA :** Learned one, what is to be done now ? Yesterday, Lord Brahma told the council of gods that Tarakasura would be destroyed by Kartikeya only. Lord Shankara is doing penance in Aushadhiprastha. We have to somehow make him favourably disposed towards Parvati, so that the son born out of their wedlock may lead our forces to victory. But here is a problem. Lord Shankara was not assailed by desires even after seeing the enticing celestial dancers. Then how can he be enslaved by the devotion of Gauri.

**BRIHASPATI :** But Sir, Gauri is not an ordinary maiden. She is like the mesmerizing power of the god of love.

**MAHENDRA :** *(With joy)* You have done well to remind me of the god of love. *(Looking towards the door)* Who is there ?

**DEVANANDI :** My Lord, it is I.

MAHENDRA : Go quickly and fetch the god of love.

DEVANANDI : As you desire.

(Exits)

(Enters Kamadeva the god of love)

KAMADEVA : My master, what is your command ? I can make anyone, whether he be a demon, a human being, a god, or even Lord Shankara himself a slave of the bewitching looks of celestial maidens.

BRIHASPATI : You have hinted at a great problem by naming Shankara. If you can make Shankara feel attracted towards Parvati, it will be very beneficial for the gods.

KAMADEVA : (Aside) Ignorance is the cause of the self-annihilation of a person. That I have boastfully considered Lord Shiva a common person, will certainly cause my destruction. (Loudly) If my Lord wishes me to fulfil this task, I will do so even at the cost of my life.

BRIHASPATI : I will also pray to my family deity for the success of your mission.  
(Exeunt all)

### Act Three

(Mahendra and Brihaspati are seated; Narada enters.)

NARADA : I am coming from the abode of Shankara.

MAHENDRA : (With folded hands) Please tell us whether the news is favourable or unfavourable.

NARADA : I shall start from the beginning.

MAHENDRA : We are ready to listen.

NARADA : After reaching the Himalaya, Kamadeva called his friend Vasanta and asked him to make the atmosphere intoxicating. This atmosphere produced feelings of love in the hearts of people living in and around the Himalaya. At this moment, Parvati appeared on the scene looking like the goddess of love, courage and sacrifice. On seeing Parvati, Kamadeva took heart and sat behind Lord Shiva. Parvati prostrated herself before the Lord. The Lord blessed her, saying, "May you get a husband worthy of yourself." Kamadeva thought this the right moment to shoot his arrow with mesmeric powers.

MAHENDRA : (Anxiously) What happened then ?

NARADA : With the help of his third eye, Lord Shiva saw Kamadeva ready to shoot the arrow.

MAHENDRA : (With fear) Please tell us the rest.

NARADA : The Lord opened his third eye and burnt Kamadeva to ashes.



MAHENDRA : Alas ! Kamadeva, who produced happiness in the hearts of all, has given up his life for my sake. But tell me, what happened to Rati and Vasanta.

NARADA : Both of them fainted. When Rati came to her senses, she started crying loudly. Then a voice from the skies consoled her saying, "Do not grieve, the beloved of Kama. Nobody can change the sequence of events as ordained by Brahma. Be consoled that your husband will be reborn during the marriage of Shiva and Parvati."

BRIHASPATI : This prophecy is sure to be fulfilled.

MAHENDRA : What did Parvati do ?

NARADA : Parvati also had fainted. So her father Himavan lovingly carried her to his house. Now I have to go to Satyaloka to relate all this to Lord Brahma.

*(Exits)*

*(Enters Rambha)*

RAMBHA : My Lord, victory be to thee !

MAHENDRA : Do you have any news ?

RAMBHA : In the palace of the God of Wealth, everyone is saying that after the destruction of Kamadeva, Parvati has decided to undergo the hardships of penance for getting Lord Shiva as her husband. Himavan also has agreed to this.

MAHENDRA : You have brought very good news. Now go and do your duty.

*(Exeunt all)*

## Act Four

*(Enters Shiva in the guise of a hermit)*

SHANKARA : This disguise is sufficient to deceive Parvati. I have already heard from Nandi about the noble intentions of Parvati as told to him by her two friends, Jaya and Vijaya. So, I should lose no time in going there and putting an end to her sufferings.

*(Enters Parvati with Jaya and Vijaya)*

PARVATI : My dear friends, my left eye is twitching.

JAYA : Friend Parvati, the twitching of the left limbs of women is considered auspicious. Now it is possible that Lord Shankara, though heartless, is going to have pity on you.

SHANKARA : *(On seeing Parvati)* It really pains me that gentle Parvati is undergoing the rigours of penance with the sole aim of getting me as her husband.

JAYA : (*On seeing Shankara*) Friend Parvati, a hermit is coming towards us.

PARVATI : Both of you do the needful to make our guest welcome. (*Jaya and Vijaya offer a seat to the hermit. They also fan him.*)

SHANKARA : (*Raising his hands*) My weariness has vanished because of your hospitality. But I want to ask both of you a few questions. Who are you? Whose daughter is your friend? Why is she undergoing such hard penance?

JAYA : Here is our friend, the daughter of the Himalaya. She is doing penance for the sake of acquiring a husband.

SHANKARA : What is the name of this heartless fellow who is intoxicated with his good fortune?

JAYA : My friend desires to marry Lord Shiva who is the greatest among the gods.

SHANKARA : (*Aside*) Now I shall test her sincerity by defaming myself. (*Loudly*) There is no accounting for tastes. Otherwise how can you with your incomparable beauty feel desire for that Shankara, who wears the skin of elephants, lives in the cremation grounds and indulges in all types of bad conduct.

PARVATI : (*With anger*) May your tongue, which criticises Lord Shiva before whom everybody bows, fall on the ground!

(*Parvati tries to leave*)

SHANKARA : (*Showing his true form*) O frail lady, I have been won over by your devotion, and now I am your slave. (*Takes hold of her hand*) I would like to marry you immediately by the rites of Gandharva.

JAYA : My Lord, you will have to accede to our request that you present yourself for the marriage ceremonies in the house of King Himavan after five days.

SHANKARA : Can this not be done in three or four days? Because the absence of the beloved makes a moment seem like millennium. I wonder how I will bear this interval.

JAYA : We are leaving now to prepare for the marriage.

(*Exeunt all*)

## Act Five

(*Himavan is seated alone*)

HIMAVAN : As Narada had foreseen, Lord Shiva is going to be our son-in-law. I am feeling very happy today.

*(Enters Narada.)*

NARADA : My mission has been fulfilled. Here Himavan is sitting in the marriage pavilion. So I am going to him.

HIMAVAN : *(Looking around)* Oh, Narada is here. *(Rises with folded hands.)*

NARADA : My blessings on you, Himavan !

HIMAVAN : All this is the fruit of the seed sown by you, Sir.

*(Enters Kaushiki.)*

KAUSHIKI : My Lord, your daughter is now all dressed for wedding. She is adorned with ornaments from head to toe. People say that ornaments beautify the body, but Parvati's limbs have imparted a certain beauty to the ornaments.

HIMAVAN : I am pleased. You have done well.

*(A loud noise is heard off-stage)*

HIMAVAN : Sage Narada, this appears to be the noise created by the arrival of the gods.

NARADA : Yes, your son-in-law is coming here dressed as a bridegroom and accompanied by the gods.

*(Enters Lord Shankara with the gods)*

SHANKARA : This capital of the Himalayas surpasses even the beauty of the capital of Mahendra, the king of the gods.

HIMAVAN : I must have done many good deeds to deserve such a son-in-law.  
*(Himavan welcomes Shankara with oblationa. Shankara accepts them after bowing.)*

BRAHMA : My Lord, where is the sacred place for performing the marriage ceremonies.

*(Himavan takes them all to the sacred place. Parvati enters with Jaya and Vijaya.)*

PARVATI : Today, the desire of my heart is going to be fulfilled.

SHANKARA : This enchanting Parvati, with her bewitching eyes, appears to be giving birth to thousands of Kamadevas in my heart.

BRIHASPATI : Lord Shankara, be seated here with the bride facing east. *(Brihaspati performs the marriage ceremonies. After the ceremonies, Brihaspati asks both of them to bow before Brahma.)*

BRAHMA : May the love between both of you be unequalled in all the worlds! May you be the parents of Kumara, the destroyer of Tarakasura!

**NARADA :** (*With folded hands*) My Lord, Kamadeva committed offence but working for the benefit of the gods. So, please make him the slave of your feet by giving him physical form.

**SHANKARA :** If it is the wish of everybody, then so be it.

**HIMAVAN :** All has ended well. May Lord Shankara bestow happiness and prosperity on all !

(*Exeunt all*)

*Parvatiparinaya*, 15th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Gnomic Verses

### FIVE WOMEN POETS

**SUBHASHITAVALI** (*Subhāṣitāvali*) is a mine of 3527 gnomic verses compiled from ancient and medieval Sanskrit poetry by Vallabhadeva (Vallabhadeva, 15th century), a poet from Kashmir. Apart from catering to the popular need for literary quotations, the anthology bears the testimony of the existence of numerous Sanskrit authors whose works are not available otherwise.

Translations of eleven verses by five medieval Sanskrit poetesses are given below: Vikatanitamba, Vijjaka, Sita Bhattarika, Subhadra and Phalguhastini. They depict the sentiment of love and appreciation of beauty in nature and women; they also document rare glimpses from the viewpoints of the elitist women of medieval India.

#### 1

### Poems by Vikatanitamba

O black bee, gratify your fickle mind  
On other flowery creepers, strong enough to bear your embrace.  
Why do you torment before time the fresh bud of the new jasmine.  
The innocent-faced immature one, her pollen yet to develop. (735)

Hey I audacious lady !  
No more your wandering and roaming.  
When the weight of your breasts grows  
You will break into two with a cracking sound. (1549)

O unfortunate one ! Vain it is to nourish a mango sapling at your gate.  
This wretch is a tree of poison.  
When it sprouts and blossoms a little, getting modified,  
The agonies of the fever of love become horrible. (1682)

## 2

## Poems by Vijjaka

Like a king desirous of victory, with its bud as a treasure  
 Its leaves like soldiers standing around the pond, its fort,  
 The brilliant orb of the sun, a strong ally,  
 Its thorns like opponents pulled down,  
 And black bees like arrows drawn:  
 O pretty young maiden ! it is indeed surprising that the lotus,  
 With all these expedients, could not vanquish your face. (1523)

Hail to the murmur "Hum, Mama"  
 Lurking in the mouth of the haughty ladies,  
 When their lover forcibly kisses them  
 Raising their face, and holding the locks of their hair. (2090)

O dull creator ! desist from this fruitless effort and ill determination.  
 That you long to see the great men lose their fortitude in calamity.  
 They are neither tiny mountains nor oceans,  
 Which at the end of a day of Brahma swerve from their course. (3138)

Obeisance to the man, remaining silent  
 When the horripilated limbs speak:  
 The intent of the poet beyond the reach of words  
 Throbbing only in his fresh words. (3158)

## 3

## Poems by Sita Bhattarika

Let the adverse god love, vehement in separation, turn the body lean.  
 The god of death, clever in counting days, is also unkind.  
 You, O master, are also in the grip of the disease of jealous anger.  
 Please, do ponder, how the young women, tender like sprout,  
 remain alive in such a case. (1633)

## 4

## Poem by Subhadra

After having propitiated the king and having received riches from him,  
 We will constantly enjoy the pleasures of the world.  
 Cherishing this hope, the men, in this world under a delusion,  
 Pass their time till they die. (3258)

5

## Poems by Phalguhastini

May the rise of the new crescent, on its first day, usher in and advance your happiness !

The crescent, the flower of the creeper-like matted hair of the three-eyed Shiva.

The bow of the god of love, the planet-sprout,

The nail mark on the hip of the twilight-woman

The disperser of darkness, the horn of the sky, and the smile on the face of the night. (1993)

Having observed the eclipse of the moon and the sun by planets

*Rahu and Ketu*

And the bondage of elephants and snakes,

The poverty of the wise and learned,

I believe that fate is most powerful. (3125)

From *Subhashitavali*, 15th century

Tr. by R.S. Nagar

## The Heavenly Flower

SHESHASHRIKRISHNA

SHESHASHRIKRISHNA (Śeṣasrikṛṣṇa, 16th century) wrote the Champukavya *Parijataharana* (*Pārijātaharanachampu*). He came from a family of great scholars and his father Narasimha was patronised by the King Govinda Tandava at Kashi. His elder brother is known as the author of *Rukminiharanam*, a play, and the commentary *Parimala* on Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari*. His two sons, Vireshvara and Narayana, are also very well-known in the scholarly circle of Kashi; the former being the teacher of the great grammarian Bhattoji Dikshita and the famous Naiyayika Annambhatta. Sheshashrikrishna enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Todarmala, one of the ministers in Akbar's court. Besides *Parijataharanachampu*, he wrote three plays and some other champus.

The theme of *Parijataharanachampu* is Srikrishna's bringing of the Heavenly Flower Parijata to the earth.

When Narada was telling all sorts of stories to provoke a quarrel in Shrikrishna's royal palace, the maids entered the harem. They were experts in back-biting. Walking with raised shoulders due to anger, they were eyeing each other; they could not walk straight out of excitement. The words of Naradamuni were resounding in their ears.

With the display of jealousy, non-attachment and ridicule interspersed with tears and choking voice, they provoked all the ladies of the harem by re-

counting the episode of Parijata flowers brought by Narada, and then gifted to Rukmini by Krishna. Sucking the venom of their tales, the ladies forgot all decency. First they stood aghast and stunned. Then the ornaments and garlands of flowers quickly fell from their bodies. They began to bathe in perspiration. Some of them rolled in anger, while others burnt like the paths of Vindhya forests in summer; their happy gestures had evaporated, and they were breathing hot air as if mixed with smoke and they looked as if consumed by the huge flames of anger, still others were submerged in darkness like the nights of rainy season with the clouds quivering and tears falling down in torrents, thunders of haughtiness resounding and their moon-like faces all clouded. Some others, in utter confusion, were asking the lady-messengers what exactly had happened. Then they discussed the matter amongst themselves, and after the conference, finally revealed the whole thing before Queen Satyabhama.

Meanwhile, finding Rukmini occupied in entertaining Narada and sensing that the ladies of the harem might have become sourhearted out of jealousy and anger, Krishna entered the harem.

There he saw Satyabhama. Her body appeared thin. She was reclining on the bed strewn with fresh flowers and new leaves. Hissing like a she-snake, she looked lost like a she-deer in a forest all ablaze with fire. She was pining like a fish in a waterless pond. She had undergone a complete change. Her eyes were shedding tears incessantly. She appeared to have been overpowered by some evil-star and looked stunned, intoxicated and attacked by some ailment, possessed by the god of love or gripped by epilepsy. Seeing her in such a plight, Krishna thought—

Surely, it is this Parijata gifted by Narada  
that has become the destroyer of all virtues.  
It is inviting as many quarrels  
as the many bees it attracts.

At this very juncture, wafted by the swaying of fans, an exquisite fragrance, never smelt before, slowly crept in. It had emanated from those very Parijata flowers, which Rukmini had just worn in her ears like rings, the sportive bees having gathered around them with humming sweet tunes.

From *Parijataharanachampu*, 16th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## Chandrakala

VISHVANATHA KAVIRAJA

CHANDRAKALA (Candrakalā) by Vishvanatha Kaviraja (Visvanātha Kavirāja, 16th century), a literary doyen from Orissa, is a play in four acts. Among his other

works are: *Prabhavatiparinaya* (play), *Raghavavilasa* (poem), *Kamsavadha* (poem), *Kuvalayashvacharita* (poem in Prakrit), *Sahityadarpana* (treatise on poetics), *Darpana* (commentary on Mammatabhatta's *Kavyaparakasa*, a treatise on poetics).

*Chandrakala* depicts the love of the heroine Chandrakala, princess of the Pandyas, for Emperor Chitrarathadeva of the lunar lineage, resulting in their marriage. The present translation is an abridgement of the play.

(Prelude ends. Subuddhi enters)

SUBUDDHI : Today, by saying so you have replied to my thinking: whether our king will fall in love with Chandrakala. Somewhere in the course of his campaign against Karnata our General Vikramabharana gave her shelter, and finding in her unparalleled beauty resembling Goddess Lakshmi, he considered that the damsel would be from a royal family. Finally desiring my happiness he sent her to me. Then I thought that the king could achieve great fortune by marrying her. But out of fear of the queen, the princess of the Pandya kingdom, I myself wouldn't be able to arrange her marriage; the king himself might marry her if she were an attendant in the *antahpura*<sup>1</sup>— thinking so I presented her to the queen: "She is one of my relatives. Kindly take care of her as one of your friends". (Thinking) Now, wherefrom can I get more news about her ? (Exit)

(The love-lorn king enters with the Vidushaka or the Court Clown)

KING : Friend, today when I was going to meet the queen, I found a certain young girl in the *antahpura*. She, indeed, is

The grandeur of youthfulness,  
Her smile abounds in beauty.  
An ornament to this earth,  
She charms the minds of youths.

VIDUSHAKA : Then what did she do?

KING : friend, what else ! She severely chained my heart by her charming qualities. Now, all day and night she is putting relentlessly the fire of passion into my overwhelmed heart.

VIDUSHAKA : Friend, when you're in such a terrible condition, why have you spent this much time away silently ? What means have you thought of for meeting her?

KING : Friend, her close companion Sunandana has promised to me that she will bring her here in this garden of love on the pretext of collecting flowers.

(Then, accompanied by Chandrakala, Sunandana enters, saying: "See, my dear.")

SUNANDANA : My dear, come here, here.

1. Royal harem.



CHANDRAKALA : (Taking a deep breath and speaking to herself.)

Will the king again adorn the path of my eyes !

VIDUSHAKA : (Pointing at Chandrakala) Friend, now please quench your fire of desire with the flow of this nectar.

KING : This is worthy, my friend, to be done now. Still let us hide for a moment here behind these creepers and observe her activities. (Both hide behind the creepers.)

SUNANDANA : My dear, here I'm collecting flowers of this *navamallika*. You please collect from that *madhivilata*.

(Indicates by finger the madhivilata behind which the king is hiding.)

CHANDRAKALA : As you like, my dear. (Proceeds towards *madhivilata* and finds the king. Bashfully bends her head to salute the king and stands still. Speaks cheerfully to herself.) Good god ! How is it that though there was no hope of fulfilling my desire, still the tree of my mind becomes fruitful now.

KING : (Cheerfully comes forward) My love, it is of no use that you are giving trouble to your limbs, soft like *shirisha* flowers, (pointing to himself) while this servant of yours is present here to bring you the desired flowers.

*(Then the king receives a messenger from the queen and leaves to meet her.)*

## Act II

*(King and Vidushaka enter.)*

KING : Friend, now show me where is my beloved Chandrakala ?

*(There enters Chandrakala tormented by love)*

CHANDRAKALA : (Breathing deeply) O my poor mind ! If you desire to get the object that is hard to get, why do you repent for not having got it: suffer the result of your imprudence.

KING : From behind these creepers let us observe her love-pangs for a while.

(Both hide behind the creepers and watch. Then Sunandana enters)

SUNANDANA : My dear, this stalk of lotus will indeed assuage the heat of your heart.

CHANDRAKALA : Friend, these are of no use now. I'm helpless, my dear friend. You're not able to protect me from that mischievous moon that is showering poison again and again, all over my body. (Faints.)

KING : (Hastily moves close to her.) I'm relieved by fortune !

SUNANDANA : Sir, by nature this young lady is as soft as *navamallika*. Since childhood she has never had a dip into such an ocean of grief. My friend Chandrakala is on penance. She is too weak to support herself. Therefore, kindly raise her with your hands. (Exits.)

KING : This is quite appropriate for the moment. (Lifts Chandrakala with his hands.)

*(Sunandana enters in haste)*

SUNANDANA : Dear Chandrakala, come here quickly. Hearing that the king has slain the hyena, the queen, accompanied by her associates, is coming towards this place to greet him (Exit)

### Act III

*(King and Vidushaka enter.)*

KING : Tell me, friend, how is my sweet-heart who pleases me by dispelling my love-pangs ?

VIDUSHAKA : With the assistance of Sunandana I've brought her to the Canopy of Jewels very close to this place. You may get Chandrakala if the queen suddenly does not appear now like a host of cloud and become an impediment.

(Then enters the Queen being ushered in by Madhavika. Both hide. Next Chandrakala enters in all eagerness with Sunandana.)

CHANDRAKALA : (Remorsefully breathes heavily.) Hay, why do you deceive me and inflict pain on me without any reason ? Now I shall commit suicide by tying myself with creepers and hanging from the branches of this *ashoka* tree. Never, never hold me back.

SUNANDANA : Don't be so hasty. Listen to me and wait for a while for the arrival of the King.

VIDUSHAKA : My dear friend, please come this way.

*(All move around)*

VIDUSHAKA : Look, look, my dear. Here is your sweet-heart glowing even in darkness by her own complexion.

*(Both come closer)*

CHANDRAKALA : (Becomes bewildered and abashed at the sight of the King, suddenly raises her hand and then bends it down; speaks to herself) What a surprise ! How has the life, that I had thought of as poison, now become nectar by my good fortune!

**KING :** My love, now this is not the proper time for you to be bewildered.

Why're you bending down your moonlike face, my life ?

**QUEEN :** (Looking sidelong at Ratikala) O friend, will my lord speak ravingly anything more to her ?

**CHANDRAKALA :** (In a choked voice) Sunandana, what confidence can we have in the king who is so frightened by the queen's rage /

**QUEEN :** (Listening) Ah ! This is the friendliness of my friend.

**KING :** Sweet-heart, why do you speak so ? From today this person will remain under your command.

**VIDUSHAKA :** (Delighted) Good god ! If my dear friend becomes servile to her, then all those residing in the *antahpura* will become her attendants.

**QUEEN :** (Advancing with fury) Ah, foolish Brahmin friend of the king ! Am I too her attendant ? (Again and again she frowns at him). Dear Ratikala, you and Madhavi, please bind this wicked Brahmin and the slave Sunandana together with a creeper and take them away. Also bring this mischievous girl by tying her hands tightly with her own upper garment. (Both act accordingly.)

## Act IV

*(The King, in a gloomy mood, enters with Vidushaka.)*

**VIDUSHAKA :** (Coming close to the King) Dear friend, may you fare well !

**KING :** (Happy to see him). Oh, my dear friend ! You're alive by good fortune.

**VIDUSHAKA :** My dear, the queen has said: "Ballad-singers have arrived here from my father's city. They're eager to see me along with my lord. I'm eagerly looking forward to listening to the news about my relations, which has not been available for a long time. Therefore if you so desire, you may please sit at the Canopy of Jewels in the *antahpura* for giving them an audience."

**KING :** (Listens and becomes delighted). I consider it a great favour of the queen who had such anger towards me that was hard to be driven away. (Both mime going to *antahpura* and arriving at the Canopy of Jewels and sitting on their respective seats. Then the queen enters along with her attendants.)

**KING :** Attendant, bring here quickly the ballad-singers who have come from the country of the Pandyas.

**ATTENDANT :** As Your Highness commands. (Exits and returns along with the ballad-singers.)

KING : (Addressing the singers) O singers, is His Highness the King of the Pandyas well?

SINGERS : By the grave of the Lord, our master is quite well. But one intense grief makes our master consider all happiness to be sorrow.

QUEEN : Alas ! what's the intense grief of my father ?

SINGERS : Your younger sister, as lustrous as you're, has been abducted by someone while she was visiting the forest. But our master had been informed by the learned Brahmins that she, rescued from the chief of the sabaras, was handed over by your General Subuddhi, Your Highness' minister. "Then, O king, if Vasantasena permits, you may kindly marry this girl whose whereabouts are given to me by the Brahmins; I give my consent". The king of the Pandyas has sent us to you with this request.

KING : What's the name of the princess of the Pandyas, O singer?

SINGER : Your Highness, her name is Chandrakala.

KING : (Exulting) Is she my sweet-heart Chandrakala?

QUEEN : Dear Ratikala, go quickly and make Chandrakala free from binding. After properly adorning her, bring her here with Sunandana

RATIKALA : As you instruct, my dear friend.

(Exits; then enters with properly ornamented Chandrakala, accompanied by Sunandana.)

SINGERS : (*With tears of exultation*) O dear girl ! by the good fortune of the royal house and the king of the Pandyas, you've come before our eyes.

(*Seeing them, Chandrakala weeps.*)

QUEEN : (*Taking Chandrakala by hand*) My lord, now kindly accept the hands of Chandrakala. My mother, father and myself too—we all give approval to this marriage.

KING : Excellent ! this is the great favour of the Queen.

(Takes Chandrakala's hand in his hands. Conches blow and *dundubhi* drums beat behind the curtain.)

*Chandrakala*, 16th century

Tr. by Bikash K. Bhattacharya

## Selections

### Bhanudatta

BHANUDATTA (Bhānudatta, 16th century), also known as Bhanukara Mishra, was a renowned Alankarika or rhetorician. His works are *Rasamanjari*, *Rasatarangini*, *Rasaparijata*, *Alankaratilaka* and *Kumarabhargaviyachampu*. The first four are on Sanskrit poetics while the last is a poem in prose and verse.

### The Heavenly Flower of Aesthetic Pleasure

The incarnation of Lord Vishnu as a boar,  
 Who having relieved the ocean of its trouble,  
 Kept the earth dancing on the tip of his tusks,  
 For which the stars formed a necklace,  
 The cloud a forehead-mark,  
 The divine river Ganga a garland,  
 The moon a sport-mirror,  
 And the sun an ear-ornament—  
 May he be for the well-being of the good !

God of love, why do you run around in anger ?  
 You will succeed in your attempt,  
 Only if there is softness in stone,  
 Flow of water in the belly of fire,  
 Nectar in the mouth of female serpents,  
 Abundance of ice in the womb of the sun,  
 Stability in the wind and truth in a dream.

O Lord Krishna ! with your departure did depart  
 Her garland of petals of newly bloomed lotus,  
 Her necklace of pearls and her girdle with bells.  
 We believe her bracelet moved up to her shoulder  
 To ascertain if there was life left in her vein.

What false words have I not uttered to please the kings ?  
 What tones have I not used to have a glimpse of ladies' breasts ?  
 Whom have I not censured senselessly in the course of learned discourse?  
 Alas, I am yet to start serving the feet of Lord Vishnu on the Narmada  
 banks !

Prolonged salutations  
 to that illustrious, magnanimous person,  
 Whose forgiveness never emaciates,  
 despite his physical emaciation,

Whose speech never loses its sonority,  
 despite his moribund state,  
 Whose mind is always free from meanness,  
 even when he is devoid of wealth !

With a good deal of effort  
the baby-swan separated milk from water:  
The monkey drank the water,  
and the cat the milk.

When lotus-born Brahma  
wishes to create sons for the wives of paupers,  
Those residing in hell  
tremble for fear of being tipped for it.

O brother chataka-bird !  
You have gone through a great deal of hardship  
there are two or three days of adversity left;  
do not give up your dignity.

Why do you look at the water of the pond  
again and again with entreating eyes ?  
You may get a little water in your beak,  
but it will be a great ignominy to your species.

While untying the knots of the blouse of the beloved  
to have a look at the breast-lotuses,  
the lover's eyes were filled with tears of happiness,  
and so it was an attempt in vain.

From *Rasaparijata*, 16th century

Tr by Triloknath Jha

## 2

### The Waves of Aesthetic Pleasure

I roamed the earth,  
only to get tired;  
I acquired learning,  
only to indulge in fruitless discussion;  
I got acquainted with celebrated monarchs,  
only to lose my self-respect;  
I cast glances at the faces of lotus-eyed damsels  
only to get separated.  
Alas ! I, a simpleton,  
did not worship Lord Vishnu at Prayaga.

From *Rasatarangini*, 16th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## 3

## The Bouquet of Aesthetic Pleasure

Having his beloved Parvati on the left side of his body in the *ardhanarishvara*<sup>1</sup> form and feeling relaxed in the fullness of her inward love, Shiva places his right foot forward on an uneven land, plucks flower with his right hand for fear of Parvati being tired and sleeps lying on the bed of deer-skin on his own right side.

The master of the house having ordered the plum-tree to be cut down in winter, the deer-eyed damsel threw the axe into the water (so that the meeting-place with her lover may remain intact.)

From *Rasamanjari*, 16th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## 4

## Alankaratilaka

If the evening prayers are not said, then there will be public criticism; but if they are said, it will amount to salutation to the sun, the progenitor of the Kshatriyas. Thus contemplates Parashurama for long. May his offering of water during the evening prayers, warmed by his breath and turned red by the reflection therein of the corners of his eyes, protect you all !

From *Alankaratilaka*, 16th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## 5

## Kumarabhargaviyachampu

O Lord Vishnu, Protector of the three worlds, whoever puts his mind even for a moment at your feet is assured of well-being as if on his palm, even though his flock of enemies cause him a lot of harm. Poetry, lovely like the flow of nectar, dances on his lotus-lips, and Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, with tinkling anklets and swaying robes, dances in his house.

I bathed in the limpid water, but my locks of hair turned matted; I did wash the mud off my body, but there was blackness on my neck; I crossed the surging waves, but my hand was full of ashes. O Mother Manikarni<sup>2</sup> I have said something very harsh for you to hear. What a unique mode of yours this is!

From *Kumarabhargaviyachampu*, 16th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

1. Half-male and half-female body of Lord Shiva and Parvati.

2. Holy place at Varanasi, on the Ganga. One who bathes there is believed to assume the form of Lord Shiva.

## The Waves of Aesthetic Pleasure

RAMANANDA THAKKURA

RAMANANDA THAKKURA (Rāmānanda Ṭhakkura, 16th century), son of Devanatha, is the author of *Rasatarangini*.

In the *ardhanarishvara* form Shiva and Parvati cannot smile freely or kiss well or talk easily or see one another and even embrace is not possible. May the agitated minds of Shiva and Parvati, desirous of having separate bodies for the sake of amorous union, be for the well-being of the world!

From *Rasatarangini*, 16th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## The Sportive Dance of Krishna

NARAYANA BHATTATHIRI

MELPUTTUR NARAYANA BHATTATHIRI (Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri, or Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, 16th-17th century), is a versatile scholar; he has written numerous works on diverse subjects like *sphota* or semantic philosophy and *mimamsa*, grammar. He is also an eminent poet. He occupies a conspicuous place in Sanskrit *stotra*-literature in general and in *Shrivaishnave* devotional literature in particular. His *Narayaniyam* (Nārāyaṇīyam) a long *stotra* epic of one thousand thirty-six verses in praise of Krishna, is very popular among *Shrivaishnavites*, especially in Kerala. Among his other works are: *Rajasuya*, a treatise on *mimamsa*, and poems like *Dutakavya*, *Panchalisvayamvara*, *Draupadiparinaya*, *Subhadraharana*, *Ashtamichampu*, *Kotiviraha* and *Svahasudhakara*.

The *Rasalila* or the Sportive Dance of Krishna in *Narayaniyam* depicts the fascinating effect of the flute of Krishna on the milkmaids and the pain suffered by them on separation from him, during the *rasa* dance-sport. Cantos 65-68 are given below:

As you had told the milkmaids at the end of their penance  
You began to perform amorous sports;  
You played your flute in the woods on the banks of the Yamuna  
When every direction was cool, bathed in soothing moonlight. (65.1)

O Lord ! the young damsels listening to your flute,  
That cast its spell on the whole of the world  
With its ascending and descending notes  
Experienced a delusion of the mind,  
Unparalleled and inexplicable. (65.2)



The lotus-eyed ladies busy with their household chores  
 And caring for their children and devoted to their husbands,  
 Were captivated by the strains of your flute.  
 Abandoning all such cares  
 They rushed to the woods, O beautiful one !  
 Where you were. (65.3)

Some, while busy with wearing ornaments,  
 Listened to the tunes of your flute,  
 And ran to you half-decorated.  
 To you they looked more attractive  
 Than the fully-dressed ones. (65.4)

O Lord ! Some lady wearing her necklace around her waist  
 And her waistband around her neck, approached you;  
 O Mukunda ! it seemed by doing so the innocent-faced one  
 Was revealing to you her particular grace,  
 Because of her hips and her necklace on it. (65.5)

Some restrained from moving out of their homes,  
 But deeply meditating on you in their hearts, O Lord !  
 Abandoned their physical self,  
 And merged in you, the Non-dual,  
 Supreme Consciousness and Bliss:  
 These ladies indeed were the most fortunate of all. (65.7)

The women who loved you as their paramour,  
 But not as the Supreme Being,  
 Attained quickly the state of liberation;  
 So meditating on you manifesting the effulgent Supreme Being,  
 I too will easily attain immortality. (65.8)

O Lord, surrounded by the beautiful maidens of Vraj  
 Who gazed bewitched on your face, benevolent and compassionate,  
 O Ocean of boundless splendour, most beloved of all the world !  
 O Lord of Guruvayur ! rid me of my ailments. (65.9)

Though determined to fulfil the cherished desire  
 Of the beautiful ones, who came to you  
 Hit by the arrows of the god of love,  
 You spoke to them in a harsh and unpleasant voice. (66.1)

You told the ladies loudly of the duties  
As of the brides of noble lineage,  
So that even the sages assembled in heaven might hear.  
Your teachings are always in accordance with the dharma,  
But your actions are not worthy of trust.  
Though pure, being above the three qualities. (66.2)

The doe-eyed damsels, utterly helpless  
At your harsh words and afflicted with grief,  
Lamented long and moaned,  
"O veritable Ocean of Mercy ! please reject us not". (66.3)

O Destroyer of the demon Mura ! Compassionate  
To hear their weeping and wailing  
You set out to sport freely with them in love  
On the sandy banks of the river Yamuna. (66.4)

On the lovely bank of the Yamuna,  
Magnificent due to the soothing rays of the moon,  
You did gracefully sit on a bed  
Made of the upper garments of the milkmaids. (66.5)

With sweet and frolicsome words,  
With the clasp of hands, and joyful kisses,  
With tight and hearty embraces,  
You filled the hearts of the yearning women  
With ecstasy. (66.6)

O Son of Nanda ! the damsels were extremely  
Thrilled and delighted to embrace you,  
O most handsome one in the three worlds  
With a lotus-like face with beads of sweat  
And a soft smile like a jasmine-blossom. (66.8)

In separation you are to them  
As hot as a burning coal;  
In union you are to them the embodiment of the erotic,  
But wonder of wonders ! in union too  
The ladies found you hot as a burning coal.  
In reality, O dear one ! you gave them exceeding delight ! (66.9)

O Lord of Guruvayur ! I worship you,  
You who are eager to embrace tightly  
The protuberant breasts of Radha,  
Kindly destroy all my ailments. (66.10)

Having united, rejoiced, and sported with you  
 The very embodiment of throbbing Supreme Bliss,  
 The lotus-eyed ladies experienced immense joy  
 And thereby felt very haughty and proud. (67.1)

"The lord of Goddess Lakshmi, the conjuror  
 Of the minds of the people of the world.  
 Is whole-heartedly merged with me in love":  
 Having noticed them haughty and proud,  
 O Govinda ! you suddenly disappeared from their midst. (67.2)

O Destroyer of Mura ! you then took along with you  
 Radha the milkmaid,  
 Very dear to you and totally bereft of pride  
 And moved far away  
 To enjoy love-sports with her at will. (67.3)

Burning with pangs of separation after your disappearance  
 The lotus-eyed ones assembled together;  
 Then they searched for you from forest to forest,  
 And unable to find you felt unending agony. (67.4)

The charming damsels devoted to you  
 Enquired of you from tree to tree:  
 "O *mango* ! O *champaka* O *karnikara*  
 O *mallika* ! O *malati* ! O tender creepers !  
 Did any of you see the stealer of our heart ? (67.5)

One milkmaid perceiving you in her imagination  
 Shouted in agitation and emotion:  
 "Friends ! I see the lotus-eyed Krishna present before me".  
 This intensified the agony of separation in all her friends. (67.6)

Totally feeling one with you  
 The ladies imitated your ways  
 On the bank of the river Yamuna.  
 Suddenly they saw Radha, whom you had abandoned  
 When she also became infatuated with pride. (67.7)

Then all of them together searched for you in the forest.  
 Till darkness descended;  
 They gathered again on the bank of the Yamuna  
 Where they lamented and sang of your virtues. (67.8)

O Ocean of mercy ! O Charmer of the love-god !  
 You are the enchanter of the three worlds !  
 Suddenly you appeared with a gentle smile  
 In the midst of the ladies of the land of Vraj  
 Perturbed by the grief of separation. (67.9)

The ladies distrustful of seeing you in future,  
 You, their most beloved one,  
 What did they not do in excessive joy  
 When they saw you suddenly appear among them !  
 O Lord of Guruvayur ! may you protect me from ailments ! (67.10)

O Louts-eyed one ! seeing you in their midst  
 The milkmaids were overwhelmed with immense joy.  
 They stood stupefied before you  
 As if drenched in the downpour of ambrosia. (68.1)

Then one of them without any hesitation  
 Taking your lotus-like hand in hers  
 Placed it on her plump breast  
 And stayed for long thrilled in rapture. (68.2)

O Lord ! another lady exuberant with joy  
 Entwined your tender arm around her neck  
 As though to hold back her vital breath  
 Fearing it might escape through her throat. (68.3)

One of them in anger and with tears in her eyes  
 Sarcastically looked at you, and cried :  
 "O merciless one ! you deserted me in the wilderness;  
 Who amongst us will hence even touch you ?" (68.5)

Then the milkmaids spoke to you thus :  
 "Mercy has many forms:  
 Some are kind to all, and some to their dependents,  
 But some are merciless as you are to us". (68.7)

You then spoke to them thus :  
 "O girls ! don't suspect me to be harsh and cruel.  
 Always loving and longing for you,  
 I acted so to make your heart long for me. (68.8)

"O mistresses of my soul ! take it from me.  
 There is none as dear to me as you are.  
 So sport and enjoy with me in pleasant moonlit nights  
 Without any hindrance": thus you spoke to them, O Lord ! (68.9)

Saying this and eager to perform the Rasa-dance  
 You played and danced with the ladies of Vraj,  
 Thrilling them with exuberant joy !  
 O Lord of Guruvayur ! protect me from ailments ! (68.10)

From *Narayaniyam*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by R.S. Nagar

## One Hundred and One Verses on Abstinence

APPAYYA DIKSHITA

VAIRAGYASHATAKAM (Vairagyasatakam) is the work of Appayya Dikṣhita (Appayya Dikṣita, 1554-1620), an eminent philosopher, Sanskrit grammarian, and devotional poet. In this collection of a hundred and one verses, the poet has propounded the theory that in this mortal world, a man should be free of all ties and desires and work for attaining salvation.

Only those people can be called saints, who are free from the ties of this world, who do not perform any deed because of their disinterestedness in their actions and reactions. If anyone has any doubts about this, then he should read *Gautamasutram*. (5)

In this world there is no dearth of people who are well-versed in polity, astrology, scriptures and gospels. But there are very few people who know the extent of their own ignorance. (26)

When a man dies, he is without any friend. His wives start looking up to their sons. The sons become eager to get hold of the property of their father, and his mother takes refuge in crying continuously. (29)

Why should a man make so much effort just for the sake of filling his small belly? Nobody digs a pool for the sake of a few sips of water. (46)

What is the use of conquering this whole world, holding the mountains of gold in one's hands and having golden women when God has made death one's ultimate destiny. (55)

From *Vairagyashatakam*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Selections

MADHUSUDANA SARASWATI

1

## Anandamandakini

ANANDAMANDAKINI (Anandamandākinī) is a lyrical poem composed by Madhusudana Saraswati (Madhusūdana Sarasvati, 16th-17th century), an authoritative exponent of Advaita. It is dedicated to Krishna and refers to many exploits of the Lord as well as sings his praises and extols the beauty of his physique and various ornaments adorning it.

○ Lord, you are the jewel of the Vraja clan. Even Goddess Saraswati, Lord Brahma with his four faces, Lord Shankara with fine faces and Sheshanaga with his thousand hoods become speechless before your majesty. Then how can the poor gods and human beings, who have little knowledge, do justice to it? And how can I, who am deficient in intellect, sing praises worthy of you? (1)

○ Lord! your friend, poor Brahmin Sudama offered you tasteless rice mixed with chaff; although you are being offered gifts every day by Lord Brahma, Lord Indra, Lord Shankara and others, you enjoyed that rice. In the same way, though you are constantly being praised by eminent poets, still I am shamelessly trying to compose your praises in meaningless unrefined language; and I hope that you will enjoy them too. (2)

○ Lord! on your dark-complexioned forehead, the mark of yellow pigment from Kashmir shines brightly like a line of gold on the touchstone. It appears as if lightning has left its flightiness and taken shelter in the cloud, or, some mango tree has sprouted on the blue gemstone. (7)

○ jewel of the Vraja clan! After taking out the essence of the ocean of all the scriptures and religious books, you collected it and placed it safely in the middle of the milky ocean in your abode. I think that all-illuminating essence has taken the form of the *Kaustubha* gem to be worn around your neck so that it may not be lost in oblivion. (38)

I salute the spouse of Nanda whose eyes fill with tears on seeing his face dirty but more beautiful than the full moon of autumn, made brighter by the glow of his swaying earrings and eyes full of mischief. Her face lights up with smiles, and overflows with love. She takes him in her arms and kisses him. (63)

## 2

## Krishnakutuhalam

KRISHNAKUTUHALAM (Kṛṣṇakutūhalaṃ) is one of the best works written by Madhusudana Saraswati (Madhusūdana Saraswati, 16th century). This is a drama in seven acts, based on the legends of Krishna.

Three wise sayings from the work are given below:

## 1

Sane and wise counsel does only aggravate the anger of the wicked, just as even cold butter acts as fuel to the fire. (I: 28)

## 2

A daughter and a poem, chaste, attractive and full of good qualities, decorations and sentiments, make their progenitors unhappy, if they are placed in unworthy hands. (III : 12)

## 3

When the children prosper, the parents also feel prosperous like the sea rising with the rise of the moon which is born out of the former. (VII : 14)

From *Krishnakutuhalam*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by G. Panda

## The Story of the Play Mudrarakshasa

## MAHADEVA

MUDRARAKSHASANATAKAKATHA (Mudrārākṣaṣanātakakathā) by Mahadeva (Mahadeva, 17th century) is a recounting of the story of Vishakhadatta's play *Mudrarakshasa* including the events forming its background. The author probably belonged to South India.

There is a kingdom called Pataliputra. All the houses in that city are built of precious stones. The palaces are very high and they touch the clouds. There is not a single poor fellow in that city; all are rich. The citizens there look like the god of love in beauty and are well-versed in all the four *shastras*. All of them are connoisseurs. They distribute their wealth like grass when approached by the needy. The ladies are as beautiful as heavenly damsels.

None of them would ever glance at the face of a man other than her own husband. There is no city like the city of Pataliputra in all the three worlds.

There in that city lived a king called Sarvarthasiddhi, who ruled over the whole earth, the boundaries of which are formed by the four seas.

The king had two wives, the senior queen, named Sunanda, came from a kshatriya family, the junior one, called Mura, was in fact the daughter of a shudra, With these two wives, the king spent considerable time enjoying all the pleasures. Yet he was not blessed with a son. Then he started observing penance of various types and giving away pious donations to get a son.

One day a sage came to him. The king reflected: "This sage looks very powerful. By his grace, I am to get a son". Thinking so, he worshipped the sage with both his wives. He then sprinkled the holy water obtained from washing the feet of the sage over the heads of his wives. Nine drops of water fell on the head of Sunanda. Only one drop fell on the head of Mura, the shudra wife, who accepted the same with great reverence with her head bowed down. The sage was especially pleased with her devotion and humility and looking at the king, he remarked; "Your senior wife will give birth to nine sons, and the junior one will deliver only one son". Having obliged them in this way, the sage went away. Soon after, both the wives of the king became pregnant. When the time came, the senior queen delivered a lump of flesh like a gourd. All were dismayed at the sight of it. But the minister Rakshasa thought, "How can it be so? The great sage had given the boon of nine sons to Sunanda, and she has delivered this lump. The words uttered by the great sage could never be false. Therefore, we will cut this lump into nine pieces and place them in nine pitchers full of melted butter. Duryodhana and his one hundred brothers were also born in this way, as we learn from the great epic". Having pondered in this manner, Rakshasa proceeded accordingly, and within a few days, nine sons were born at the same time through this process.

The king was extremely pleased with the intelligence of the minister, and the people were astonished at his achievement.

Only one son was born to Mura. Even though born to a shudra, he was a genius, very humble and expert in polity.

*Mudrarakshasanatakakatha*, 17th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## A Preface to the plot of Mudrarkshasa

ANANTASHARMAN

ANANTASHARMAN (Anantasarman, 17th century), who was a court pandit of King Chitrabhanu of Bundelkhand, was one of the numerous authors who attempted to rewrite the story of the play *Mudrarakshasa*. Anantasharman's version called



*Mudrārākṣhasapūrvaṣaṅkathananaka* (Mudrārāksasapūrvasankathānaka) is noteworthy amongst them. He has preserved the complete narrative of the rise and fall of the Nanda dynasty and, without breaking any of the threads, has provided a fine specimen of Sanskrit prose modelled on that of Bana and Dandin. He depends on the *Brihatkatha* tradition for his version of the narrative.

The following is his preface to the plot of *Mudrarakshasa*:

As ill-luck would have it, king Nanda gave up his ghost after some time. At the same juncture, a hermit called Suvidya entered the city of Pataliputra. Actually he had been the chief of a small village in the Vindhya forests; and his name was Chandrahasa. The Yavanas took away all his wealth and so he got disenchanted with the world and went to Nepal. There with the grace of Lord Shiva, he acquired the skill to enter another's body. He had promised a few of one lac gold coins to his guru.

Accompanied by his two disciples, he sat on the bank of the Ganga to pass the midday. There he learnt the news of the sad demise of the king from the mourning citizens. Then he thought:

"Better lie on the top of a mountain  
and wear clothes made of the bark of trees,  
Better take the food of fruits and the roots  
in and old forest,  
Better die in this world, but never say, "please give,"  
before a person intoxicated with his wealth.

Begging therefore will not be proper for me. I can do the job of entering the body of the king and make Sushila, the disciple, beg before me." Having thus decided, he told his disciple, "O Sushila, I will enter the body of the king and you will come to me today in the evening and beg for one lac gold coins for the fee to be paid to my guru. And you Bahushruta, you will protect my body here with great care".

Having given instructions to them, he cleared his soul out of his body by his skill and entered into the body of the king.

The king rose as if awakened out of sleep. The minister Rakshasa got him seated on his royal chair in the Suganga palace and ordered for the festivities.

At this very time, Sushila approached the fake king, and the latter ordered for the grant of one lac gold coins to him. Minister Rakshasa perceived that the king had suddenly come to life and his behaviour was altogether changed. He thought: "Definitely, the body of the king has been possessed by the soul of a man who has the skill to enter other human bodies. This man may return to his original body after securing his own interest here, then we will again be deprived of the king. Let us therefore destroy the original from which this soul has emanated".

Rakshasa then rode on a swift horse and began his search. Riding on the banks of the Ganga, he found Sushila and Bahushruta worrying why their master had not returned. He thought: "Here is the monk who obtained one lac gold coins! He looks perplexed even after getting the money. Therefore something must be going on here".

He then found the body of the hermit and decided that the owner of that body must have entered the king's body. He got the body of the hermit burnt on the pile of wood immediately.

*Mudrarakshasapurvasankathanaka*, 17th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh  
Tripathi

## Selections

### PANDITARAJA JAGANNATHA

PANDITARAJA JAGANNATHA (Paṇḍitarāja Jaganātha, 17th century) one of the most celebrated poets and rhetoricians in Sanskrit, hailed from Andhra Pradesh and was patronised by Shah Jahan (1628-56), King Jagatsingh of Udaipur (1628-59) and Pranaranayana of Assam (1633-66). Besides five *laharis* or *devotional poem*, *Rasagangadhara*, the *magnum opus* on poetics and an anthology of lyrics, he wrote some prose compositions too.

#### 1

### A Eulogy to Asaf Khan

Of these, ASAPHAVILASA (Āsaphavilāsa) has been termed by him as an *akhyayika* or narrative. This small work in very embellished prose is a fitting tribute to Asaf Khan, brother-law of Emperor Shah Jahan, who had patronised and helped Panditaraja in the Moghul court.

Salutations to Shri Ganesha. Here is the Emperor Shah Jahan. He dispels the darkness of the universe by the rays shooting from the full-moon-like nails of his feet which are garlanded by the precious stones worn on the heads by all kings. His praise, brightly shining like mercury, is sung by the heavenly damsels in ecstasy. Thus, by the height of his glory, he has risen higher than the mountains, and by his lustre resembling that of a newly-risen sun, he has made the lotus of the universe bloom.

Drums resound the earth when he sets out for a campaign. The sound of these drums wrestles with the shores of the sea of milk and repudiates the thunder of the clouds of the Deluge. Deep in the mountain caves, the lions hear it with their eyes raised in anger owing to the disturbance to their slumber.

When the child Ganesha is sleepless at night  
 and starts weeping, Mother Gauri sings before him  
 Songs in praise of the powerful elephants  
 In the army of Shah Jahan, ever intoxicated with the  
 downpour of *madajala*.<sup>1</sup>

With the arrows shot out from his fierce bow, the emperor has enslaved the whole earth and defeated his enemies.

Once the emperor made a trip to Kashmir, he was accompanied by an army like a sea. The army consisted of huge elephants with *madajala* shooting out of their temples. They looked like the off-spring of mountains slowly treading on earth. The army also consisted of horses which created circles of lightning when their hoofs clashed with stones.

The land of Kashmir was full of uneven paths, full of descending and ascending movements like the vedic chant. Like the ritual of sacrifice they required immense practice, but led to happy results. The tender grass on the earth there looked as if it was made of emeralds. There were a number of lakes that made the land still more beautiful. The water in those lakes looked like the viscous mixture of the lustre of emeralds.

Ducks floated on these waters. With their beaks besmeared with the pollen of the lotuses, they pecked at the bodies of the flamingoes.

The land is surrounded by the lofty ranges of the great Himalayas. because of the thick fog and the clouds always gathering around, they appear to be surrounded by a wall of silver. The tall trees are always in bloom and the bees hover over them humming sweet tunes. Because of the weight of the fruit, the branches of these trees always bend down.

Nabab Asaf Khan had accompanied the emperor in this trip. All the provincial rulers offered salutations at the feet of the Nabab, and the scholars gathered around him like bees, attracted by the fragrance of his flower-like-feet. They sang his praise like bees humming tunes, which resounded in all the directions. His fame was as bright as the flow of the Ganga, descending from the Himalayas, and even the lustre of the moon surrounded by the clouds of autumn envied it. It had crossed the boundaries of all the four seas, and had whitened the whole world. He was powerful like a lion to scare away the elephants of poverty, which make the scholars tremble like trees and like a tall tree he provided shelter to all the *dvijas* (brahmins/birds); like the spring season he let all the *sumanas* (noble hearts) flowers bloom; like the moon he was *asumanah prasadana*, pleasing to the heart and the mind, incapable of making the red lotuses bloom; he was worshipped in the *samara*

1. Secretion in elephants in rut.

(war) and by the *amara* (gods); he was amongst the provincial rulers what belles- lettres was amongst all the varieties of belles- lettres; like *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure) amongst all the types of *dhvanis* and like *shringara* (erotic sentiment) amongst all the rasas.

*Asaphavilasa*, 17th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

2

Bhaminivilasa

In *Bhaminivilasa* (Bhāminīvilāsa) also, the scholarly poet has exhibited his literary ability in depicting various moods in different chapters. The excerpts given here are from Chapters I- IV.

The following are wise sayings from the work.

1

My nectar-like poem, the utmost limit of sweetness, produced by churning the ocean of literature, is the giver of great pleasure on this earth, to those who partake of it. (I.1)

Elephants with their temples soiled with ichor are heard to have fled to the end of the quarters; the female elephants are the objects of pity; while other beasts of prey stand no comparison in nature. Where in the world should their the Lord of beasts exhibit the skill of his claws, with their ends matchless in sharpness ? (I.2)

O, tell me, how should the leader of the swans, who formerly passed his life in the Manasa lake, scented by the pollens dropping from rows of full-blown lotuses, now remain in a puddle full of multitudinous frogs, flocked together? (I.3)

When chakori birds, their eyes tremulous on account of thirst, look eagerly towards the east, when night lotuses give up their silence and blow open, when the god of love shakes his bow of flowers and the amorous pride of haughty ladies is about to disappear, is it then, O Creator, proper for the clouds to begin to envelope the moon? (I.4)

O lotus in bloom, let the bees licking your honey, hum melodiously. But this other one, the wind, who diffuses your fragrance in every direction, is an indifferent friend. (I.5)

When the bee approaches you, by chance, O Kutaja flower, do not disrespect him: he is highly honoured by the lotuses rich in honey. (I.6)

Pass the uninteresting days, O cuckoo, dwelling in the heart of a forest without cooing, until the mango tree, with the bees flocking together, puts forth blossoms. (I.7)

O lotus-plant! Why do you make mind dejected because you are disrespected by the herons? May the bees, that appreciate your fully matured honey, live long in this world! (I.8)

O well! never give yourself up to sorrow with the thought: "I am exceedingly low", you have excessively sweet water at the bottom, and you accept the rope of others. (I.9)

Alas! How did the bee, passing his days in a full-blown lotus, containing a great deal of honey, cherish a longing for another flower? (I.10)

Indeed, the keeper of the garden is thoughtless, the earth is void of moisture, the ten quarters are rendered dusty by gusts of wind, and the scorching heat is unbearable, though these are the reasons for the destruction of the champaka in the barren land, you, O cloud, sprinkling water on it, are sent by Brahma from an unexpected quarter. (I.31)

Alas! today the female jackals are howling near the door of the dead lion, where myriads of pearls are rolling, where formerly elephants, whose eyes were tremulous owing to excessive fear and around whose temples dripping with excessive ichor the bees were hovering, did not dare to stand steadily. (I.32)

Loving all the trees impartially, the gardener did not show any special compassion towards the young bakula plant. Still, it filled the ends of the quarters with the humming of clusters of bees from bunches of flowers quickly springing from it. (I.33)

Your big trunk is firmly strengthened by the roots, your many branches are massive, your situation is on a mountain difficult to ascend; O lord of trees, whence is the danger to you? Only the voracious relentless conflagration, forming circles of flames, produces a little fever in the form of mental agony. (I.34)

O cloud, the chataka bird, though scorched with terrible rays in summer, passed with great difficulty the long days, contemplating on you, now that you, who have come within the range of his sight through his good luck, have taken to the kindness of showering hailstones on him; with whom shall we lodge a complaint? (I.35)

How should that lion, who covered the earth with rows of pearls dropping from the temples of elephants torn open, today speak about his valour to the deer? (I.51)

O deer, inhabiting the mountains and taking pleasure in fickleness, how have you resolved yourself to bathe in this river which is agitated on account of its surging waves, since in this same river that lord of elephants has been drowned like a stone, tossed by the great whirlpools of the surging mass of waters. (I.59)

A wicked man, the brother of a cobra, strives to kill his benefactor without fear, forgetting the service done to him even as a cobra forgets the milk given to it. (I.76)

If that wicked person, for whom we have condescended to become bards, setting aside our learning, and who was raised to a position, difficult to be attained even in thought by us, being established there with great effort, goes against us forgetting all previous obligations, what shall we now say about anybody? (I.77)

The absence of virtues is good. Fie upon multitude of virtues! Ordinary trees thrive, while sandalwood trees are cut off. (I. 88)

\* \* \*

May my mind, distressed by the objects of senses surrounding it like the flames of the fire of the forest surrounding the extensive forest, turn to Mukunda as the chakora bird turns towards the moon which is the receptacle of all sweetness and source of rapidly increasing splendour! (II.1)

O Lord Vishnu, support of the lotuses in the form of the eyes of Lakshmi, speedily cool me, who am breaking under the excess of pain that conquers the burning fire, by your glances, liked by the three worlds, and the destroyers of the pride of greatness arising in a morning lotus. (II.2)

Let Shri Krishna, the indescribable row of clouds, which, when merely remembered, removes through kindness the terrible anguish, and which is encircled by hundreds of lightnings of everlasting glow and which rests on the celestial tree on the bank of River Kalindi, be the object of my contemplation. (II.3)

May Shri Krishna, the *tamala* tree, which brightens the interior of the wilderness of Brindavan on the banks of Kalindi, which always removes the fatigue of the journey of births and deaths, encircled by hundreds of rows of creepers (gopis) and adorned by pleasant splendour, remove my fatigue completely and instantly! (II.4)

May Shri Krishna, the new cloud which pervades the surface of the world with the new nectar full of splendour, which instantaneously inhabited the Brindaban forest and was surrounded by all the gods bowing down, destroy the darkness of my heart! (II.5)

May Shri Krishna the best of the Vrishnis like a cloud in the rainy season, remove the agony of me whose body is distressed by the terrible flames of the disc of the scorching summer-sun in the form of worldly existence! (II.6)

May Shri Krishna the new *tamala* tree, whose home is on the bank of River Kalindi, remove the encircling vexations of mine who am dull-minded exhausted, and restlessly wandering often and often in this impassable worldly existence, which is a road to the uneven forest in the form of worldly pleasures! (II.7)

May Lord Vishnu, with a lotus in his navel, sportively embraced by Lakshmi, the delicate daughter of the ocean, like the tamala tree by the *priyanga* creeper, shine in my heart at the time of the termination of my body! (II.8)

Let my enemy incessantly blow excessive fire on my head or cause the edge of the sword fall on it, I shall not talk even one offensive word. (II.27)

From *Bhaminivilasa*, 17th century

Tr. by E.V. Dadape and D.G. Apte

## ii

O dainty maiden! if you make your face slightly more charming with the hint of a smile, then you may consider the empire of the king of the night sky, the moon, as already conquered. (II.171)

Smiling very sweetly, and muttering to himself, the intoxicated man considers unthoughtfully the three worlds as beautiful as a red lotus. (II.172)

O young lady! your lips are sweeter than honey. Put them on my face and take my lotus-like hand in your hands. Aha! I am f-f- falling on the g-g-ground. (II.173)

The lucky man somehow reaches the topmost chamber of the palace by employing hundreds of means; after waking up the slender royal lady whose eyes were filled with wonder, whose face had a faint smile and who was sleeping in solitude on a flower bed as white as the foam of the sea of nectar; embraces her with deep sighs. (II. 174)

In the ponds, the bees are flying in all directions humming sweetly. Sometimes, they run forward; then they turn back and run in circles. (II.175)

Each time that I savoured the lotus-eyed damsel lovingly, she, like the ultimate truth, diverted my attention from all sides and made it concentrate on the one emotion of love. (II.176)

A house may be full of all luxuries; but if it does not have a doe-eyed mistress, then it is no better than a forest. (II.177)

There is not a single man whose heart does not miss a beat on seeing the beautiful gait of a fair maiden who has a shock of unruly hair, who captivates the eyes of people with the playfulness of her eyes and who is going to the house of her beloved in the evening. (II.178)

The moon appears to be a weak echo of the doe-eyed maiden whose face is filled with nectar, and is made beautiful by the gleam of her teeth. It surpasses the beauty of the lotus. Then why does Lord Brahma, who is foremost among scholars, not rectify the folly of repetition? (II.179)

Aha! my beloved's kind, loving, clever and naturally calm disposition captivates my heart. (II.180)

Her tresses appear like young snakes. The corners of her eyes are as flighty as a feathered arrow, She herself can be compared to lightning. Then tell me, how can such a woman be a source of joy in this world? (II. 181)

O doe-eyed beauty! there used to be a certain sweetness in your face and your tender heart used to be full of kindness. It is very sad that today these places seem to be full of contrary qualities. (II.182)

The face of my beloved, adorned with a pearl at the tip of her nose, appears as beautiful as the ring of the full moon with a glint of planet Mercury in it. (II.183)

O my heart! it is very sad that luck has turned its back on us and all our dearest friends have departed for their heavenly abodes. Now to whom are you going to tell your tale of woes and who will bring peace to your suffering mind with her soothing words? (III.1)



O my beloved! why can't you give me pleasure today by getting up courteously, giving me smiles which are help-mates of the love god, looking at me with love-filled eyes and speaking to me sweetly, as you used to do previously. (III.2)

All worldly pleasures have left me. My hard-earned learning has turned its back upon me. Only that doe-eyed beloved never goes far from my heart like its presiding deity. (III.3)

O kind hearted lady! while taking leave of this world in a hurry and entering your heavenly abode, did you also take leave of your natural kindness? If not, then, why are you not looking at me with flashing eyes which have surpassed even the beauty of the lotus blossoming in the early hours of the day. (III.4)

O my playful beloved! how will you, who, at the time of our marriage, caught hold of my hand firmly because of the fear of your feet slipping from the stone slab, climb the steps of heaven alone, leaving me behind? When I think about this, my heart breaks into a hundred pieces. (III.5)

O my beloved! you came into my life like a flash of lightning and gave me all the pleasures enjoyed only by the king of the gods. Then suddenly you slipped out of my hands leaving me distraught like a king who has been deserted by the guardian deity of the State because of the failure of his authority. (III.8)

O my beloved with the eyes of a young deer! while sitting on the ground yourself, you used to transport me to the delights of heaven by uttering such endearments as beloved, master, charming, etc. in my ears. Now how can you yourself ascend to heaven and throw me on the ground? (III.13)

O my darling, you had dazzling beauty, incomparable virtue, other-worldly humility and purposeful conduct. Now why have you gone to heaven making all these qualities homeless. and leaving me also behind. (III.14)

O lotus eyed-beloved, it is my firm belief that, though you were very beautiful, yet the jealous god of fire burnt you to ashes, because it was angry with you on account of your beauty which was more glittering than the gold, and your purity which always outshone its own flames from all sides. (III.15)

As a goddess my beloved was worshipped by women. She was as soothing as camphor-paint for my aching eyes. Only she could give pleasure to my neck like a garland of fully-blossomed lotus flowers and she was as enchanting as a heart-captivating poem. (III.16)

O my beloved, whose thighs are as graceful as those of a young elephant! is it because you are angry with me on account of some impropriety committed by me that, despite being a faithful wife, you have suddenly forsaken me for the far- away pavilion of celestial women? (III.9)

O my doe-eyed beauty! previously your nectar-like playful antics used to take the form of poetry in my mind. Now, in their absence, how can anyone write good, heart captivating poetry? (III.10)

O wide-eyed fair maiden! when you were alive, the moon-light was a failure among the poets of this world which was made beautiful by the dazzle of your smile. Suddenly after your departure, the very same moon-light has acquired the splendour of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. (III.11)

My beloved used to worship me continuously with eyes like fully-blossomed lotus, after soaking me thoroughly in the nectar of her soft smiles. She was benevolent; she fulfilled all my desires. She was the presiding deity of my home, and she can never depart from my heart. (III.12)

O my beloved, even in your dreams, you never looked with desire at any other man whosoever, except your husband. It is really sad that now the very same person, you, have embarked on a journey to attain God who is *nirguna* without any quality. (III.17)

Everybody's heart is gladdened in extolling the virtues of your utterances showering nectar, your looks held in esteem by the best among poets; your creation which is full of kindness and without parallel in this world. (III.18)

My heart is scorched by the ever-spreading flames of fire raging in the great forest of material objects. May my heart become a chakora bird and look forever at the perfectly beautiful, very gentle moon-like face of Shri Krishna! (IV.1)

O God, you are the refuge of the louts-eyes of Lakshmi, the daughter of the sea. I am being destroyed by grief more powerful than even the fire. Have pity on me, and with your eyes, which have humbled the pride of lotuses blossoming in the early hours of the day, and which impart happiness to all the worlds, bestow peace on me presently. (IV.2)

The daughter of Kalind mountain, Yamuna, is encircled by hundreds of flashes of lightning. Being kind by nature, she removes the great grief of even those people who just think about her. The brilliance of her body is ever-lasting, I just wish that some cloud-range hovering above the trees growing on the banks of such a river would touch my heart. (IV.3)

May the *tamala* tree, which shows up the spaces between the forests growing on the banks of the daughter of Kalind mountain, which always takes away the weariness of travellers traversing that path, which is surrounded by hundreds of creepers, and which has a beauty of its own, remove my extreme exhaustion at once! (IV.4)

May Lord Krishna, whose complexion is like a newly-formed cloud, who is a resident of Brindavan, who fills all the three worlds with fresh nectar lit up by moonlight, who alleviates all three types of suffering in no time and who is surrounded by the gods, banish the darkness from our minds ! (IV.5)

This world, like the fiercely blazing summer sun, has been scorching my body. May Lord Krishna, who is foremost among the descendents of Yadu, appear like a monsoon cloud and put an end to my agonies! (IV.6)

I am exhausted after continuously traversing this fearsome, boundless forest of worldly desires. May Lord Krishna, who has his abode on the bank of the Yamuna, the daughter of Sun-god, and who has the beauty of a young *tamala* tree, extinguish the anguish of my confused mind! (IV.7)

I wish that Lord Vishnu, who has a lotus growing from his navel and who is embraced playfully by Lakshmi like a *tamala* tree embraced by the *priyanga* creeper, would light up my heart with His presence at the time of my departure from this world. (IV.8)

May the wonderful formation of clouds, which has the power of increasing the feeling of blessedness in the eyes, put an end to my torments in time! (IV.9)

O master, through your uncomplicated nectar-like words you imparted knowledge to me. But I am such an ungrateful wretch that, being egoistic by nature, I did not think about you even in my dreams. I have committed hundreds of such sins. Even after this, if you still consider me as one of your own, then there is no one as compassionate as you, and nobody as intoxicated as I. (IV.10)

O my heart, your longings are not going to be quenched even by descending to the netherworld, or ascending to heaven, or climbing the Sumeru, or crossing all the seas. You have been plagued by mental as well as physical diseases. So, my advice to you is that if you want your well-being, then just savour the tonic of the name of Shri Krishna. Nothing can be gained by undertaking other unprofitable exercises. (IV.11)

O merciful God, you delivered even notorious sinners like Ganika and Ajamil from the clutches of this world. I am also struggling violently in the sand-pit of this world. Please do not completely deprive me of your mercy. (IV.12)

I don't know when I will be able to soak myself completely in the love of Lord Krishna, whose beauty is comparable to that of a newly-formed cloud and is beyond words. It is possible only when, after realizing that this visible world is full of dangerous enemies, I withdraw my senses from their objects and go into a state of deep meditation and, in this way, destroy the darkness of my mind. (IV.13)

O my soul, while being born again and again on this earth, you must have eaten grapes many times, you must have partaken of plenty of sugar and you must have drunk sufficient milk also. And when you ascended to heaven, you must have savoured nectar, and bitten the lower lip of celestial dancer, Rambha, also. Now tell me truthfully, during your journeys, did you ever anywhere find such abundance of sweetness as is seen in that word of two syllables "Krishna". (IV.14)

The two-syllabled name of Krishna is like a thunder-bolt for the mountains of sin. It acts as a panacea for the disease of worldly desires. Like the rising sun, it destroys the dense darkness of the night of fake knowledge. For the ever-growing trees of sufferings, it is like the Fire god surrounded by locks of leaping flames. Victory be to this name which also opens the door of the palace of salvation! (IV.15)

3

## Ratimanmathanataka

i

## Spring

Spring is in its full glory because parrots have started chirping, cuckoos have also started singing; fragrant breezes from the caves of Malaya hills are blowing; trees are in full bloom; fortune is smiling on the bees; and desires galore spring up in youthful hearts.

ii

## Woes of a Minister

A minister is always distrustful of even a master who listens to his advice. He has to cultivate carefully the people living in the inner chambers of the palace. He has to give due respect to his master's favourites. He has also to keep track of the doings of those people who always find fault with him. He has to give encouragement to the soldiers. He has to listen to the reports brought in by the spies from all around. He is also supposed to have the knowledge of the income of the affluent.

From *Ratimanmathanataka*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Selections

## NILAKANTHA DIKSHITA

NILAKANTHA DIKSHITA (Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, 17th century), poet-scholar of the Dikshita family, was the younger brother of Appayya Dikshita. Among his major works are learned commentaries like *Tantrasiddhanta-dipika* and poetical works such as *Anyapadeshashatakam*, *Nilakanthavijaya Champu*, *Nalacharitam* and *Gangavataranam*. Selections from the last two works are given below.

1

## Life of Nala

*Nalacharitam* (Nalacaritam) is an incomplete play. In the five and a half acts that are extant, the playwright tells the story of the marriage of King

Nala with Princess Damayanti. Lord Indra, the king of the gods, also desires to marry her but Goddess Sarasvati is in favour of Nala. She is instrumental in getting their marriage solemnized, even in the face of opposition from Lord Indra. The frustrated Indra nurtures a grudge against King Nala and conspires to create unrest in his kingdom. Unfortunately the play ends here abruptly.

## Act I

*(Enter King and Vidushaka)*

VIDUSHAKA : Victory to you, my lord. May I know the cause of your sadness?

KING : My friend, I have no secrets from you. I feel depressed because, in my dream, the moment I cast my eyes on an extra-ordinarily beautiful maiden of captivating charm, I was rudely woken up by the morning prayers.

VIDUSHAKA : Dreams of early morning are always fulfilled.

KING : You also know about my encounter in the woods.

VIDUSHAKA : I know only that a heavenly golden swan was caught by you.

KING : On seeing the tears in its eyes, I took pity on it and released it. Before flying away it said-

SWAN : "You have done me a favour. In return, I shall help you in winning the gem among women."

KING : Saying this, it flew away. But I know nothing about this maiden.

VIDUSHAKA : Stop worrying. You paint a picture of the maiden as you saw her in your dream. We will show that painting to our astrologer and find out all about her.

KING : That is a wonderful idea. Bring me my painting materials.

VIDUSHAKA : Presently, my lord.

*(Goes out and comes back with the materials)*

KING : By concentrating hard, I can recall her features. *(Paints)* I have painted the lady of my dream. Ask Satyacharya to come.

*(Enters Satyacharya)*

SATYACHARYA : My blessings on you, King of Nishadha.

KING : Please accept my salutations, and be seated. *(Showing him the painting)* On the basis of your knowledge of astrology, what can you tell us about this lady ?

SATYACHARYA : She is from the human race. She should be the daughter of the king of either Virata or Vidarbha. Even the gods may try to win

her hand, but they will not succeed. Only a great king will marry her. But there will be many obstacles before and after her marriage. What is more, you will shortly hear about her from a bird speaking our language.

KING : Please keep this matter confidential.

SATYACHARYA : I am your servant, sir, *(Exit)*

VIDUSHAKA : Let us go to the garden.

KING : As you wish.

*(Both go there. A swan lands near them.)*

SWAN : Victory to the king!

KING : Welcome to the king of birds!

SWAN : I have been sent here by Goddess Sarasvati on behalf of Damayanti, the princess of Vidarbha.

KING : What can be her object in sending you here?

*(The swan gives a letter to the king).*

KING : (Joyfully) Has this been written by the Goddess herself? She writes a divinely beautiful language.

She writes, "My blessings to you, my son. Lord Brahma, after creating such a beautiful gem in the person of Damayanti, has commanded me to find a bridegroom worthy of her so that her beauty is not wasted.

KING : I depend upon you to do what is necessary", I am much obliged by this.

SWAN : I shall take my leave now.

KING : You have done me a great favour, please visit us again. We are also leaving now.

*(Exeunt all)*

## Act II

*(Enter Indra and Vishvavasu seated in an air-chariot driven by Matali)*

INDRA : Matali, we want to reach Vidarbha quickly. So loosen the reins of your chariot.

MATALI : As you desire, my lord. We are already past Amaravati. Ahead of us is the Mandara mountain. Now we are nearing the earth.

VISHVAVASU : This is the Kailasa mountain, the abode of Lord Shiva.

INDRA : We are fortunate in having glimpses of these mountain ranges which, in truth, are the footprints of Lord Shiva.

MATALI : Here is the holy city of Varanasi made sacred by the river Ganga, which fulfils all the desires of human beings After crossing the Vindhya, now we are in beautiful Kundaipuri, the capital of Vidarbha.

INDRA : Land the chariot in this garden. Vishvavasu, repeat to me the advice of Vachaspati.

VISHVAVASU : He said, "Damayanti can be attained only by making Nala the messenger of your love".

INDRA : I think we should first find out about Damayanti's interest. There is a maid over there. You go and talk to her. I shall hide myself.

VISHVAVASU : (*Going near the girl*) Fair maiden, how are you?

MAID : Are you, by any chance, Bhadramukha, the messenger of Nala?

VISHVAVASU : (*Grabbing the opportunity*) Yes, yes.

MAID : My mistress lives only to listen to the news of Nala.

VISHVAVASU : But we have heard that Indra was also interested in her.

MAID : My mistress also came to know of this today, That is why she has discarded all her ornaments and is tossing uneasily on the floral-bed. Now she will be pleased to hear the news of the arrival of King Nala.

INDRA : (*Coming out*) Vishvavasu, look at the irony of fate. I, Indra, whom the women of this world desire unsuccessfully to have as their husband, am shamelessly pining for Damayanti, who does not care for me for attaining her, I Shall have to beg Nala to be my messenger.

(*Exeunt all*)

(*Enters Damayanti conversing with her friends. Enter King Nala and Vidushaka and stay behind a tree.*)

KING : (*Looking at Damayanti*) It is the same charming lady of my dreams. But she appears paler. Let us sit here and listen to their conversation.

(*Both sit down*).

DAMAYANTI : My heart is trembling after listening to Indra's offer.

CHANDRAKALA : Have no fears, friend, Lord Brahma's wishes and the Goddess's blessings favour only Nala.

DAMAYANTI : This passion for Nala has put my whole body on fire.

KING : How she suffers for me!

(*Enter Savitri and Sarasvati*)

SAVITRI : It is really surprising that you, who are beyond all joy and sorrow, are taking such an interest in this affair.

SARASVATI : (*Smiling*) Though I myself love to be here, Lord Brahma also wishes me to do the same.

DAMAYANTI : (*Coming near*) My salutations to you, Goddesses.



SARASVATI : (Taking Damayanti's hand) Darling, for the fulfilment of your desires, pray before Goddess Parvati.

DAMAYANTI : May she always look on us with compassion!

SARASVATI : Beloved Damayanti looks tired and the heat is also terrible. So let us all rest in the cool shade of the *sala* tree.

SAVITRI : As you wish.

SARASVATI : Savitri, can you tell me where king Nala will be now?

KING : (*Joyfully*) Oh, the Goddess herself is asking about me. This is the proper time to show myself.

(*Goes forward*) O Mother, the son of Virasena bows before you.

SARASVATI : I am very happy to see you healthy and alive, my son. (*Embraces him*)

KING : (*To Savitri*) My salutations to you, Goddess!

SAVITRI : May your wishes be fulfilled with the blessings of my friend!

DAMAYANTI : (*Aside*) On seeing him, my pain has vanished and I am forgetting myself.

SARASVATI : Daughter, welcome our guest by offering him the betel-leaf.

(*Damayanti, feeling shy, sits motionlessly. Sarasvati takes her hand and puts it in the hand of the King.*)

SARASVATI : My son, accept her,

KING : I accept her as your blessing.

(*Enters Vidushaka*)

VIDUSHAKA : My lord, Indra is coming here in search of you.

KING : It is a matter of great joy that Indra himself should want to meet me.

(*Exeunt all*)

## Act IV

(*The King enters looking pensive*)

KING : Even after seeing Damayanti, I am not certain of winning her. I am being tortured by the arrow of the god of love. Even the cool breeze of Spring does not give me any pleasure.

(*Enters Vidushaka*)

VIDUSHAKA : Victory to my lord!

KING : Please be seated.

VIDUSHAKA : Please tell me about your conversation with Indra.

KING : Friend, this meeting posed a burning problem for me. When I reached there, Indra respectfully gave me a seat near him. Then Vishvavasu started singing my praises by saying that I had pleased the gods and conquered even the Lord of Death, etc. etc. I told him to stop all this and come to the point. Then he told me that though Indra was great and all-powerful, yet he has one desire which could be fulfilled only by me.

VIDUSHAKA : And what was that?

KING : He said that as Damayanti was attracted towards me, I should go to her and arrange a meeting between her and Indra.

VIDUSHAKA : What was your reaction?

KING : What could I do? I have taken a vow never to send any beggar empty-handed. But then if I acceded to his request I would have had to forgo Damayanti, who is my life. So I resorted to tact and said, "I will do as you tell me and give your message to Damayanti, but I cannot assure you of the success of my mission."

VIDUSHAKA : But you cannot go to her with such a message.

KING : I have to fulfil my promise and tell Damayanti about Indra's wish and then take her reply to him.

*(Goes out and comes back looking pleased )* Damayanti has refused to meet Indra.

VIDUSHAKA : Then why do you not go and give him the news?

KING : It is not proper that I myself should give this bad news, which is lucky for me. So you be the bearer of this news.

VIDUSHAKA : Then I must go.

*(Exit)*

KING : I do not know how Indra will take this news.

*(Enters Vidushaka)*

VIDUSHAKA : Victory to thee, my master!

KING : You look disturbed. Did Indra not behave courteously to you?

VIDUSHAKA : His behaviour was improper. *(Says something in the King's ear)*  
He is also going to write to you some nasty things.

KING : He must be very angry to say such things.

VIDUSHAKA : Well, I have some good news for you. After hearing everything from Goddess Sarasvati, the King of Vidarbha wishes to see you in the early morning. He feels that if you accept the hand of his daughter, then it will be the ultimate glory of his life.

KING : If everything is settled, then we should wait for the morning. But when will this long night end?

*(Exeunt all)*

## Act V

*(Enters the King with Damayanti)*

KING : My beloved, do not grieve, Taking leave of the elders always produces sadness. Goddess Sarasvati was more than a mother to you. She stayed in your house for three years. We do not know whether we shall see her again or not. So separation from her must be causing you great sorrow.

DAMAYANTI : My lord, show me the way to the harbour.

KING : Come this way. You are tired . So you may lie down and put your head on my lap.

DAMAYANTI : *(Closes her eyes and cries out in sleep)* My master, do you leave me and go to the forest?

KING : Is Damayanti foreseeing my going to the forest in her dream? *(Wakes her up)*.

DAMAYANTI : Oh my lord, you are here. Please do not ever leave me. I have been frightened by a bad dream.

KING : My love, this dream is not going to come true. Let us go inside.

*(Exeunt)*

## Act VI

*(Enters Kamantaka)*

KAMANTAKA : My left eye is twitching. I see inauspicious omens. Indra considers Nala to be his enemy because of Damayanti. We hear that our enemy Pushkaraka has joined with Indra.

*(Enters Bhadramukha)*

BHADRAMUKHA : My salutations, Sir!

KAMANTAKA : Is it true that Indra and Pushkaraka have entered into friendship?

BHADRAMUKHA : They are true pen-friends. But we do not know the subject of their pen-pal-ship.

KAMANTAKA : Do you know that they are going to attack us soon? After hearing from the spies and putting two and two together, the queen

herself informed me of this. Please go and inform the king likewise.  
BHADRAMUKHA : As you wish.

(Exit)

(Enters Rajapurausha)

RAJAPURUSHA : The King commands you to take some measures to curb the lawlessness and indiscipline among people.

KAMANTAKA : (Aside) How can these things prosper in the reign of Nala? I think it is the doing of some angry gods. (Aloud) Fetch Sharangaka.

*Sharangaka enters*

SHARANGAKA : My salutations, Sir!

KAMANTAKA : (To Rajapurusha) You can leave now and inform the King that we are doing whatever necessary. (Rajapurusha leaves) Sharangaka. I want you to interrogate all suspicious persons and investigate secret and doubtful events.

SHARANGAKA : I will inform you about it in the evening, Sir.

[The play ends here abruptly]

(Exit)

*Nalacharitam*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

2

## The Descent of Ganga

*Gangavataranam* (Gangavataranam) describes the descent of River Ganga, the river of gods, on this earth. Here the poet writes about the penances performed by Bhagiratha, the boons granted to him, the river's unwillingness to come down and then the final descent. In this excerpt, Section V of the work, we are told how furious Ganga is when commanded by Lord Brahma to go to the earth and how Lord Shankara tames her in his matted locks.

1

Thereafter, when Lord Shiva had cast a look all around, King Bhagiratha invoked the proud river of the gods by means of meditation.

2

In a moment, River Ganga became very flustered because of anxiety in her mind. She prepared for descent with her waves, which had been on all sides for long.

3

Then the heavenly river went to Lord Brahma to tell him about her voyage. She spoke to him thus in a boastful voice devoid of all humility.

4

There is this three-eyed forest-dweller named Shiva who lives on the crystal-clear mountain. He has the ambition of carrying my waters; the force of flow has already been tested by you.

5

I have a father who is very old and a younger sister who has given her heart to Shiva. If both of them do not put any obstacles in my effort, then there will be neither Shiva nor Mount Kailasa.

6

I have stayed in your house for a long time. Therefore, I want to make you happy by throwing Shiva into the nether world who has become arrogant after having cut your head.

7

Shiva, sucked in by the whirlpool of my fiercely roaring descending waves, is certainly going to be looked for among the conch-shells by Nandi.

8

Shiva thinks that my naturally intoxicating waters are just another kind of poison which he can drink. Tell him to revise his opinion so that my younger sister should not come to any grief.

9

Even if, for fear of the untimely end of this world, you beg of me not to do so, I shall certainly not tolerate that arrogant Shiva who has hopes of containing the flow of my waters.

10

**“Tell me, what is going to happen to Shiva when he hears the loud roar of my flowing waters? You can somewhat imagine, because you have a little knowledge of their force”.**

11

**Having thus boastfully talked to Lord Brahma, she addressed the assembled gods in this way: “Have no fear. My waters have been humiliated by (the lack of) your valour.**

12

**“Now all of you can go back to your homes, But if you are curious to see that moment of great spectacle, then you can go to the corners of the world fearlessly ”**

13

**Terrified by her utterances, the gods went to Lord Shiva. Even a stone-hearted person will be troubled by such utterances.**

14

**When the gods, stunned by the glory of Lord Shiva, got ready to speak, he pacified them by a glance of his eyes**

15

**Thereafter, Ganga came out of the palace of Lord Brahma. Her gait was erratic and slow because of wrath. All set to destroy this world, she returned to the pool of water and disappeared into it.**

16

**A long while ago, Lord Brahma had built bridges of Vedas around her. After felling them at one go by her high-rising waves, she soon over-ran them.**

## 17

The fate of the living beings! From oceans at the end of an aeon, as it was conceived by Brahma, as if brought into reality by her (descents) then. Who indeed does not bear the fruit of action!

## 18

When, after reaching the knee-level, the waters rose above the navel all of a sudden, the cries of the hermits, screaming for shelter, could be heard from all sides.

## 19

When the abode of Lord Brahma was completely submerged under the waters of the river, there were only a few sages well-practised in *Pranayama* who survived although drowned.

## 20

Goddess Sharada, sitting in the top chamber of the palace of Lord Brahma, was terrified and got up suddenly carrying the book in her upraised hand. For her each passing moment appeared like an age.

## 21

Even Lord Brahma, though proficient in the creation of this universe, was unable to find any solution to this. It is often seen that people are adept in advising others in their misfortunes, but cannot find solutions to their own problems.

## 22

After completely submerging the *Satyaloka*, the world of Lord Brahma, under the waters, and enveloping it like a fog, the naturally forceful rushing waters of the heavenly river receded from everywhere in a moment.

## 23

The paths, which inspite of the presence of waters, could be traversed easily on foot earlier, and were later submerged under navel-deep water, became free of water now, and the land under it became visible. But the face of Lord Brahma was distorted with anger.

24

Lord Brahma was embarrassed when his near and dear ones started singing his praises by saying that they had been saved from this great calamity only because of his pence. Untimely praise pleases no one.

25

Sighing deeply, Lord Brahma looked sadly at the walls of his abode where the foaming waters had left their mark.

26

After the waters had receded, Lord Brahma became very depressed, wondering why he had not built banks all around the river. Such is the nature of elderly people.

27

With faces stained with tears of joy and exclaiming that they had been saved, the sages raised their arms and embraced each other.

28

After leaving *Satyloka*, the divine river decided to go to Indrapuri, the abode of gods; the moist wind, like her standard-bearer, started blowing on the paths making the people flee.

29

The heavenly beings, yakshas, roaming freely in the skies, were warned about the impending disaster by the roar of cascading waters of Ganga.

30

After hearing about the descent of the heavenly river step by step from the visibly agitated spies, the celestial courtesans deposited their valuables in the topmost floor of their palaces.



*31*

One could see a number of charioteers running after horses suddenly released from stables, and the gods mingling with clusters of clouds floating above the houses in that city.

*32*

When the river appeared without any warning, Lord Indra came out of his palace and the warriors, strunned by his sudden appearance, started fleeing. In this way, the whole city of the gods was made restless by her.

*33*

Thereafter, that divine river descended upon Indra's palace, which was as white as the tooth of a lion. At that time, she looked like devotion personified before falling on the forehead of Lord Shiva.

*34*

For a moment, the white palace of Lord Indra could not be distinguished from the streams of water falling on its top.

*35*

Even though the river waters fell far and forcefully on the top of Indra's palace, the city of thge gods escaped unharmed from them like a man protected from heavy rains by an umbrella.

*36*

It seemed that the city of the gods had been built with such efficiency that it could provide shelter to those people who would be drowned by that river after her appearance on the summit of the earth.

*37*

After this, the flowing river filled the whole of the sky like the bright moon-light of autumn filling all the quarters.

38

With her swirling waves in the sky, she appeared to the clever gods like a garland of white mallika flowers around the matted lock of Lord Shiva.

39

In the sky, some heavenly elephants were being carried away by the swirling waters. They looked like creatures of water. Nobody could distinguish between an elephant and a god.

40

Terribly shaken by the swirling waters, the trees of *Nandanavana*, the garden of the gods, looked like a number of *gadas* or maces being swung before being thrown at their targets.

41

The roaring whirlpools of the descending river looked like circles of hymns created by her invocations of the gods.

42

The river of the gods carried away many clothes and ornaments from the palace of Lord Indra, as if to give them to her younger sister Parvati, who had married the foremost among beggars, i.e. Shiva.

43

From everywhere, the flowers showered by the heavenly trees, and the heavenly minstrels, well-versed in the art of singing praises, were carried away by the waves.

44

Many gods were made to leave for the abode of Brahma after being hit by the turbulent waves colliding with one another. Who is not benefited by being bathed in her waters?

45

Satisfied with the show of force by her looking like an army equal to Indra's in valour, she set out for the abode of Lord Shiva as if to fight.

46

From the abode of Lord Brahma to the ranges of the Himalayas, the white waves of the river looked as beautiful as the rows of arch glances thrown in a row to see the heavens from all sides.

47

Her predecessor, the water-laden wind, reached the cave of Shiva's matted hair, and roared as if forbidding the heavenly river from descending there.

48

Out of love and respect, the river touched Parvati, the spouse of Shiva, very gently with only one of her hand-like waves.

49

The violence of the waves emerging from the mouth of the river was such that the waters splashed all around as if hit by rocks thrown in them. On seeing this, the gods fled to far-off places.

50

Raising his neck a little, Lord Shiva saw the descending river with indifference through half-closed eyes hardened by anger.

51

As soon as Lord Shiva lifted his head to see her, the river descended at that spot to the great surprise of the gods.

52

It seems the river had drenched Lord Brahma thoroughly out of anger at being cursed by him at one time. Now she struck at the skull of Lord Brahma placed at the head of Lord Shiva with her violent waves.

53

With her sacred waters the river washed away this world's sins born out of the doom-like situation created by the beheading of the fifth head of Lord Brahma.

54

A number of heavenly planes, which were carried there by the waves and now were showering flowers on the forehead of Lord Shiva, were driven away by the swirling staff of Nandi.

55

"Who is this woman who has the temerity to wet the forehead of my master? Let me swallow her completely". Thinking thus, the elephant raised its tusk a bit but was pacified by Lord Shiva immediately.

56

Refreshed by the breeze from the waves, the snakes residing in the matted locks of Lord Shiva spread their hoods to save the moon from being drowned.

57

Like a she-serpent entering the urn, the sacred river also entered the bound matted locks of Lord Shiva so suddenly and quickly that the gods were left gaping.

58

For only a moment, the gods were able to see the heavenly river entering the locks of Lord Shiva. After that they could hear only the sound of the cascading waters, which did not have any significance.

59

The great waves of the river of the gods disappeared in the cave-like matted locks of Lord Shiva in the same way in which a good deed done to an ungrateful person disappears.

60

At it is difficult for living beings to come out of the cycle of rebirth after entering it once, the river was also unable to come out of Lord Shiva's locks and kept circling there.

61

The river of the gods bathed Lord Shiva with her waters which destroy all sins according to the Vedas. Perhaps because of this deed, she was able to attain the distinction of remaining on the head of Lord Shiva.

62

The waves of the river felt a slight discomfort at being bound on all sides by the matted locks heated by the fire of the Lord's eyes.

63

When Lord Shiva playfully shook his matted locks made wet by the waters of the heavenly river, a few elderly women, a number of *yakshas* and *vidyadharas* and many sages became unconscious in different parts of the city of the gods.

64

Attracted by the noise of the roaring waves in the sky, Himalaya, the king of mountains went to Mount Kailas to take away his daughter, Parvati, from that place. But there he saw Lord Shiva's matted locks wetted by the waters of the heavenly river being covered by Parvati with her head-scarf.

65

The head of Lord Shiva, with its happy serpents, bright moonlight and bouquets of blooming white flowers seemed filled with the fragrance of the flowers of the heavenly trees shaken by the river of the gods.

66

Then the caves on the banks of Kailas were filled with the sounds of

prayers recited in praise of Lord Shiva. The assembly of celestial-singers were also accorded a place of honour because of their songs about how the pride of Ganga was shattered. There can be no greater wonder than the descent of Ganga.

From *Gangavataranam*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

3

One Hundred and One Gnostic Verses

*Anyapadeshashatakam* (Anyāpadesasatakam) contains one hundred and one gnostic verses composed by Nilakantha Dikshita. These verses cover a large number of topics and expound certain hometruths.

Several weary travellers, arriving together, take shelter under a shady tree. One of them is grateful to the tree and with a contented mind thinks well of it, another wants to take some branches of this tree in order to make a walking stick for himself, while the third one wants to fell it down to make a door for himself. (1)

O king of elephants, while standing on the bank of the river you play with the water with the tip of your trunk. If you are thirsty, you must drink water. But you are eroding the soil and making the water dirty. Who is going to suffer because of this? This is the same water, brother, which will quench your thirst when you need it. (10)

•

Long, long ago, when it was raining everywhere, some of the drops fortunately fell into some shells and turned into pearls after some time. The cloud performs such miracles now-a-days also. Otherwise its thunderclaps produce ache in the ears. (23)

O female chakravaka bird, how long is your life-span? And in that life-span how long can be the period of your youth? Then half of your youth is wasted because you cannot meet your beloved during the nights. And in the remaining few moments with your beloved, if you spend your time in anger born out of love, then your whole life is wasted and no one will praise you for it. (24)

•

Now that winter is gone, there are new blossoms in the mango tree. The cuckoo will taste them and then sing beautifully. Let it be so. O crow, you

have nothing to grieve about. You are a free bird. You do not have to worry about the proper time, proper tune and proper food. (48)

From *Anyapadeshashatakam*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

4

### Nilakanthavijaya Champu

*Nilakanthavijaya Champu* (Nilakanṭhaviṇaya Campu) recounts the tale of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons. Being a Shaivite, the author has focussed the whole narrative around Lord Shiva.

The passage given here describes the gods living in exile after their defeat by the demons.

The gods observed penance there. The demons snatched away their share of offerings in sacrifices through their spies. Those were the days of famine for the gods. The sages had even stopped performing the sacrifices. When the gods approached them with a request to give their offerings secretly, without ritualistic formalities, the sages could not agree to it, as the scriptures did not allow them to do so. So the gods suffered on account of hunger. They themselves sometimes offered *havish* to the fire and consumed whatever the fire-god returned. They passed several days in this way. Some gods could get hold of some foolish devotees, and assure them: "We will provide a place in haven to you and your kith and kin with these very bodies of yours; we will bring the heavenly damsels before you here itself." Thus by tempting the devotees they were able to get plenty of offerings—animals, pitchers full of wine, sweet dishes, etc.

When the human beings living in heaven descended from there after the expiry of the period of their good deeds, the gods approached them and inquired: "What do the demons do? What do they talk about us? Had the Creator of the world pardoned their misdeeds? Or has he not heard anything about all this? What do the astrologers of the demons say? How is Shukracharya, the teacher of the demons? And what about Indra's flag Vaijayanta? And who is occupying the Nandana Gardens in heaven? We hear that even Indra's elephant Airavata has lost his rut. And we have no news of his horse, Uccaiḥshravas". The gods made these queries again and again very cautiously, keeping their eyes in all the directions.

They approached the sages who were about to die and depart to the abode of Brahma. They offered these sages a comfortable death, and then appealed to them: "Tell Lord Brahma about our miseries and woes. Preoccupied with your own spiritual activities, please do not forget our request".

The gods were unable to dream. So they went to these sages who could dream and asked them about the end of the period of their calamity. They

cursed their own lives and breathed in heavily again and again, awaiting the arrival of their teacher Brihaspati.

From *Nilakanthavijaya Champu*, 17th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## Selections

### HARIHARA

HARIHARA (Harihara, 17th century), also known as Harihara Maithila, is the author of two plays, *Bhartriharinirveda* (a philosophical play chiefly presenting viewpoints of the Natha Śampradaya) and *Prabhāvatīpariṇaya*. He has also compiled the *Sūktimuktāvalī*, an anthology of gnomic verses.

#### 1

### The Story of Bhartrihari

The goddess of destiny  
is empowered to do or undo  
pleasant and unpleasant things.  
Man is not to blame.

•

O slim lady !  
for the house you are a treasure;  
for the family a river of well-being;  
for our eyes a unique shower of fresh nectar;  
for our body an overflow of abundant camphor-powder  
coupled with sandal-paste,  
and for our bed an immortal vine of amorous dalliance.

From *Bhartriharinirvedanataka*, 17th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

#### 2

### Gnomic Verses

If you desire to possess  
the art of subjugating the world,  
collect proper witty sayings  
and concentrate your attention upon them.

•

Earning wealth is troublesome;



acquisition thereof in one's house is equally so;  
when acquired, the distribution thereof among friends  
is really delightful.

•

Gracious learning,  
like the service of a good king,  
teaches the code of worldly conduct,  
gives wealth, refreshes the mind,  
and enhances the learner's importance.

•

On this earth wealth alone  
makes the life of a man successful.  
If a man bereft of wealth is alive,  
say how a dead man looks.

From *Suktimuktavali*, 17th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## Selections

### VENKATADHVARIN

VENKATADHVARIN (Venkātādhvarin, 17th century) or Venkatacharya was a versatile scholar and prolific author. His work, *Vishvaguṇadarśhachampu* (Viśvaguṇādarsācampu), is a poem in prose and verse. Among his other works are *Lakshmisahasram* (poem), *Shrinivasasahasram* (poem), *Yadavaraghaviyam* (poem), *Uttaracharitam* (poem), *Subhashitakaustubha* (anthology of gnomes), *Hastigirichampu* or *Varadabhyudaya* (champu), *Pradyumnananda* (play), *Subhadraparinaya* (play), *Shringaradipikabhāṇa* (play). *Vishvaguṇadarśha* is mainly about a geographical tour of India's various rivers and mountains and places of worship. In the last chapters, a description of the characteristics of various professions is also given. There are two characters in this work. One, Krishanu, always looks at the dark side of everything, whereas the other, Vishvavasu, always rebuts his charges and shows the bright side.

Four passages from the work are given below :

1

### River Yamuna

Vishvavasu (*with folded hands*) : My salutations to you, River Yamuna,  
whose dark splendour has been enhanced by the embraces of Lord Krishna.  
My salutations also to your bowers moistened with drops of your water.

I also salute the milkmaids who sit in those bowers waiting for the embraces of Lord Krishna, the foe of Demon Mura; I bow again and again before the Lord who is worshipped by these maidens. (Verse 123)

*Krishanu* : Friend ! stop this tribute to Krishna, who is foremost among thieves and dandies, and who cheats all people. (Prose 40)

Moreover, Krishna, with eyes full of mischief, is caught eating butter stolen from the homes of other people by the milkmaids; and surrounded by them he is brought before his mother. His mother scolds him by saying, "I have told you not to steal butter: then why did you do that ?" But he knowingly misunderstands her and puts all the blame on her by saying, "It was you who told me to steal only man-made things." (Verse 124)

This naughty Krishna first placed a parrot on the shoulder of a milkmaid with his own hand. And when that maiden, with fear-filled eyes, told him to take the parrot away from her shoulder, he pulled at her upper garment. (Verse 125)

When he returned home after spending the night with Radha, his mother reprimanded him saying, "I have told you again and again not to commit these misdeeds. Then why did you do them again ?" But he playfully flattered her saying that by being with Radha he was only obeying her command. (Verse 126)

Visvavasu: Friend, do not speak thus. That most sacred Krishna takes the human form in order to destroy the sins of all people and to bless his devotees. He is beyond all criticism. (Prose 41)

His manifestation signifies the end of all evil. His world-purifying songs are sung by everybody. My salutations to the supreme being, who is worshipped by all. (Verse 127)

Listen to his extraordinary qualities. (Prose 42)

It is known universally that a thief steals. But nobody has seen the theft or the act of stealing itself. Listening to the tales of Krishna's stealing destroys perforce even the inclination to commit theft, etc. out of ignorance. (Verse 125)

With the appearance of the dark clouds on the horizon, the summer season comes to an end; the swans fly back to Manasarovara, there is mud everywhere and the waters become dirty. In the same way, with the birth of Lord Krishna, a demon named Agha has been slain, another demon by the name of Hamsa is also annihilated; His fame is spreading everywhere and the good fortune of Kamsa is coming to an end. This is indeed very strange. (Verse 129)

I bow to you, Lord Krishna. You destroyed Kamsa, slew Mura and Hamsa and vanquished other demons like Bana, Paundra and Bhauma. You humbled the pride of Lord Indra. And you are the protector of suffering humanity, who consider you as their refuge. (Verse 130)

## 2

## Goddess Kamakshi

Vishvavasu: Goddess Kamakshi, the jewel of the city of Kanchi, the fulfiller of her devotees' wishes, the protector of the army of gods and the all-in-all of Lord Shankara, is resplendently present here. (Verse 312)

O Goddess Kamakshi ! whoever has seen the brightness of your teeth will never think highly of jasmine flowers. If a learned man sees your face, then he would not like to see the moon. Even a child will not praise the newly-blossomed blue lotus after seeing your eyes. If anyone hears your sweet voice, then he would not be able to find any sweetness in honey. (Verse 313)

Krishanu : Though the beauty of Kamakshi is praised by all, it is all wasted, because (Prose 123)

Her husband (Shiva) the slayer of the god of love, is odd-eyed. Her son (Ganapati) has got the face of an elephant and a bulging stomach. So what is the use of her beauty ? (Verse 314)

It is well-known that the couple Kamakshi and Shiva are mismatched. (Prose 124)

She is blessed with all prosperity, while he dwells in the cremation ground. This goddess is bedecked with gold, while Shiva roams around like a beggar in all directions. She is smeared with vermillion, he with ashes. She has beautiful curly hair, whereas his matted locks are horrifying. (Verse 315)

Vishvavasu: Friend, you should not talk like that. The natural beauty of beautiful people does not diminish by their unsuitable residence, clothing, etc.

Even though a lotus, surrounded on all sides by weeds, grows in a marshy land and is covered with black bees hovering above it, it still looks beautiful. In the same way, Lord Shiva will always be beautiful whether he wears elephant-skin or snake-skin or dwells in a cremation ground. Also, (Verse 316)

That man is handsome who pleases a clever woman likewise, that verse is beautiful which pleases the heart of a connoisseur. (Verse 317)

There is something very strange in their relationship. (Prose 126)

We have heard that the god of love was conquered by a glance of Lord Shiva's eyes. But here you can see the opposite of this, because here.

Lord Shiva is conquered by the glances of the eyes of the god of love i.e., Goddess Kamakshi. (Verse 318)

The daughter of the Himalayas is also very fortunate in her sons, because. (Prose 127)

The first-born of this daughter of the Himalayas is elephant-faced, learned Ganesha. And her second son is six-faced Kartikeya, who has surpassed even his own five-faced father. (Verse 319)

### 3

#### River Kaveri

Vishvavasu: This pleasant breeze which is heavily laden with chill and fragrance—because of its expertise in playfully making the fragrant-lotus-rearing, billowing waves rise and ebb, and which is very fond of taking a dip in the waters of the Kaveri—is worshipped by one and all. It drives away the fatigue of the weary travellers. (Verse 389)

I pay my respects to the grand flow of Kaveri running near Rangapura and making the bunches of lotus-flowers sway with the waves, because I think it was created to dispel the darkness of ignorance. (Verse 390)

This Kaveri river looks fully determined to wash away all the sins of this world. Because of its dense, dark groves of trees like vakula, arjuna, amalaka, kunda, sandal-wood, mango, kerala, saffron, berries, lemons, black berries and big-leafed and flowering trees like palasa, kapittha, lodhra and puga, with swarms of bees fluttering here and there because of their fondness for the most refreshing honey, it compares favourably with River Yamuna. And by reflecting the sparkle of large pearls, glistening with beads of sweat of nightly labour of love-making, set in the swinging necklaces of the beautiful women of the king's inner chamber taking bath in its waters, it equals River Ganga's whiteness caused by being born of the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. It also tries to imitate River Sarasvati in redness by reflecting the rays of gems in the hoods of Shesha, the divine serpent, the resting place of the Eternal

Being who is ever-present in River Kaveri. On both of its banks, the most pious Brahmins recite two or three times the vedic hymns with correct accent at the time of performing daily rites. It appears as if they are propagating the teachings of Lord Brahma, seated on the red-lotus coming out of the navel of Lord Vishnu. The pollen-grains scattered by the pushing of intoxicated young swans engaged in embracing and kissing their beloveds make Kaveri look as if smeared with sandal paste. With many lovely maidens playing in it, with waters up to their necks, one gains the wrong impression that out of jealousy for its name-sake, Lord Vishnu, who can manifest himself in various ways, the moon has also appeared in many forms. But when this wrong impression is dispelled, the satisfied chakravaka-couple embrace each other warmly and unabashedly and the young men gaze gladly and without winking their eyes at the faces of lovely maidens adorning its waters. It flows towards the sea; it also reverberates with vedic hymns. That's why it is called the daughter of a scholar. Because it provides shelter to the peace-loving devotees, it has also acquired the epithet of the mother of Bhishma. It absolves of all sins those who take a dip in its waters, as also those who worship it. This river takes away the fatigue of weary travellers and pleases the eyes. (Prose 166)

It seems as if the destroyer of our sufferings, the universally-praised, golden-complexioned daughter of the Sahya mountain, Kaveri, with its multi-coloured beautiful foaming waters, is making fun of Ganga, daughter of Lord Vishnu. (Verse 391)

People think of ocean as the husband and this golden river Kaveri as his wife. The conjugal life of these two is praiseworthy. (Verse 392)

Krishanu: How can anyone call this Kaveri a golden river when it is surrounded on all sides by copper-like mango trees and in its middle is situated Shri Rangaraja which is like silver? (Verse 393)

Vishvavasu: Even this fallacious argument of yours is to its advantage. So observe carefully its beauty: (Prose 167)

This daughter of the Sahya mountain is going happily to her husband's place after leaving her father's house. She is suitably dressed for the occasion in yellow around the waist and her waves look like her plait of hair adorned with the garland of red lotuses. (Verse 394)

Growing on both the banks of River Kaveri, these trees, adorned with bouquets of whitest flowers, look like white-head-band-wearing travellers all set to cross the river. (Verse 395)

## On Poets

Krishanu: Friend, here you can observe the poets performing the deeds proscribed by scriptures. (Prose 233)

It is really regrettable that, instead of employing their heart-winning felicity of expression, to praise Lord Vishnu, these poets make it subservient to the wicked and miserly kings. So the learned men irrigate their kitchen-gardens with the sacred Ganga water brought from far-off places to sprinkle on the gods ? (Verse 542)

As a foolish king decorates the body of his pet dog with pearls worthy of being set in the crowns of gods, a poet employs his beautiful verses in describing detestable female forms instead of praising Lord Vishnu, who is the protector of his worshippers. (Verse 543)

Vishvavasus: You should not criticise these poets who act like the sun dispelling the gloom of our ignorance. (Prose 234)

In this world, there may be some useless poetic compositions but there are other compositions also which are full of the exploits of Lord Krishna and which fulfil all our desires. Alms given to agnostics may not bear fruit, but money given to a worthy person always adds to the glory of the benefactor (Verse 544)

No blame can be attached to a poet who, while composing a poem in praise of God, uses the language of love and courage, which are the essential components of poetry. In doing so, he is only following the path shown by poets like Valmiki and Vyasa in their epics. (Verse 545)

Krishanu: The poets who praise human beings are not fit to be applauded by wise men. That is the reason why followers of scriptures denounce them. (Verse 546)

Vishvavasus: Only foolish people can find fault with the poets for being enamoured of money, because this lust for money is common to all men. (Prose 235)

While the poets praise the kings with their beautiful verses, other people flatter them with crude nonsense-words. The only difference between the poets and other laymen is the ability to create verses. But applauding important men is a universal failing. (Verse 547)

Those ancient poets like Valmiki, Vyasa, Parashara and others are revered by all. In the same way, the assembly of modern poets is also venerated by the connoisseurs, for they bestow favours on the world.

(Verse 548)

There are modern poets like Magha, Mayura, Murari, a critic named Bharavi, Shriharsha, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bhojaraja, Dandin, Dindima, the crown of Vedic scholars named Bhallata, Banabhatta, Subandhu and others who have made this world happy with their compositions.

(Verse 549)

The topmost scholars always consider that man worthy of praise, in whom the qualities of wealth and humility, creativeness and knowledge, strength and the will to do good to others, sovereignty and simplicity, magnanimity and sweet speech and good conduct and knowledge of the scriptures co-exist side by side.

(Verse 550)

It has to be borne in mind that :

There has been a poet named Shathakopamuni whose heart was entirely absorbed in the revered dust of Lord Vishnu's feet. And there have been other virtuous poets who have sanctified this world with their compositions.

(Verse 551)

From *Vishvagunadarshachampu*, 17th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## Selections

### RAMABHADRA DIKSHITA

SHRINGARATILAKA (*Śṛṅgāratilaka*) is a bhana written by Ramabhadra Dikshita (*Rāmabhadra Dikṣita*, 17th century). Two excerpts are given below, which give tongue-in-cheek accounts of a religious preacher and an old soliciting woman.

#### 1

### A Religious Preacher

"Friend, turn your eyes towards the west. Who is this person coming towards us? On his left shoulder, he is carrying a bag of deer-skin. In his right hand, he has a voluminous book. You can faintly see the sacred mark on his forehead. He is wearing a *dhoti* and on his chest can be seen the sacred thread. What do you say?"

"Don't you know that this is the religious preacher named Narayanabhata going for his morning bath ? Do you remember the time when we were bathing in the river Vetravati ? There we gave him vegetables and berries as offering".

"Oh, it was a long time ago, and I, being absorbed in my pursuits of passion, had forgotten all about this poor preacher who is a natural enemy of all sensual enjoyment. What are you saying ?"

"Let it be so. Enough of this false preaching to others. He himself pursues all the worldly passions. Those who come to listen to his preachings offer him betel leaves, garlands of deer-musk and sandalwood with devotion. And after the recital of scriptures is over, he lures the widows to lonely places and extracts his offering by pulling at their upper garments."

## ii

### An Old Soliciting Woman

"On hearing my voice, is this old woman Mandarika, carrying a winnowing tray in her right hand and in a state of great agitation, rushing towards me from her house ?"

[(*To himself*) "Oh, how ugly ! She has difficulty in walking because of her distended stomach. Her breasts are hanging like pumpkins. Her grey hair is blowing in the wind. In the cavity of her mouth can be seen three or four rod-like teeth. What can I say ? It seems that the creator has wilfully distorted his own creation. I do not know what she will do now. I cannot even stretch my hands and feet because of fear. What should I do now ?]

"Well, I say, 'Mandarika auntie, how are you ?"

"She is retorting angrily, 'O you cad ! the worst of villains ! den of vices ! shameless wretch ! now that you are caught, you are trying to flatter me by sweetly calling me 'auntie'. I am going to hit you with this old winnowing-tray. You can leave only after settling my dues. I have been looking for you for the last one month, but couldn't find you. Don't you see that these fun-loving men like yourself give more than their due to the harlots ?"

(*Closing my ears*) "Stop it, stop it. I have heard enough. Now, for her, even Bhujangshekhara has become the worst of villains !"

(*Angrily*) "O you old, wretched, characterless, hard-living she-monkey! once before I ignored you when you cast aspersions on Kanchanalata's character. But today I am going to behead you with my sword."



## 2

## Hymn to Rama's Bow

*Ramachapastavam* (Rāmacāpastavam) eulogises the celebrated bow of Lord Rama and invokes a renowned dramatist and devotional poet. There are one hundred and eleven verses in this composition. Five of them are given below:

May the bow of Lord Rama shower its blessings on us ! This bow is the cause of Lord Rama's fame as the protector of the world. Goddess Sita worships it respectfully by offering incense, flowers and vermilion. The string of this bow had put its mark on the bridge over the ocean. This bow is universally praised.

We have got nothing to do with Lord Indra, Lord Yama, the lords of the different quarters and other gods. We do not want to disturb even the trinity of gods. Even Lord Rama accompanied by Sita may go wherever he wants. For us, human beings, the ultimate refuge is that bow of Rama whose string has been washed by the waters of the ocean at the time of the construction of the bridge. (10)

Other people may be charmed by the clamour created in the river Yamuna by Lord Krishna's dancing on the hoods of the serpent Kaliya in order to subjugate him. For myself I prefer that bow carried playfully in his hand by Lord Rama whose trumpet-like sound fills the hearts of the enemy-warriors with terror. (11)

On the battlefield, when Hanuman was killing with his feet and fists his powerful enemies who were throwing swords, shooting arrows and discharging weapons, then the bow of Lord Rama encouraged him with the loud struming sound emitted by it. May that unique bow of Rama bless us ! (57)

On the battlefield, Hanuman attacked the enemies in various ways. He attacked the first and the second with his body and eyes, the third and the fourth with his feet, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh and the eighth with the blows from his hands and the ninth and the tenth with the shoves from his knees. After making them flee, he laughed uproariously and the bow of Lord Rama joined in that laughter with the loud sound of its strings. I worship that bow for my well-being. (58)

## The Wind-Messenger

VADICHANDRA

This *SANDESHAKAVYA* (message poem) was written by Vadichandra (Vādicandra, 17th century). In this poem, after praising the wind, the poet wants to use its services as a messenger to send the message of love of King Vidyanareśa of Ujjain to his wife Tara who was abducted by a *vidyadhara*, a semi-divine spirit. This was written in the style of Kalidasa's *Meghadutam*.

O wind, when you are going speedily to perform some errand for others, then the very big trees with widely-spread-out branches try to put obstacles in your way, but with renewed vigour you fell all those arrogant trees; because nobody can stand for long before the might of good people.

(8)

It was your son who speedily revived Sita, kidnapped by Ravana and separated from her husband, by giving her the message of the well-being of her beloved. There is nothing surprising here because he was following in the footsteps of his father. It often happens that the feats performed by youngsters do not evoke any wonder in the grown-ups.

(13)

When the love-Iron women are going to the houses of their lovers leaving darkness behind, you assist them in pacifying their pangs of love by forcibly bringing the cloudes there and thus covering the moon and the stars with them. It is often seen that good men have compassion for children and young women.

(16)

O my beloved, because of my sins, I have been separated from you, so I cannot make love to your beautiful body. Then let me do so in my dream. Even that will give me happiness. Why should not a hungry man drink butter-milk, when milk is not available. The acquisition of some happiness with great difficulty never lessens the charms of the original.

(34)

O wind, you will recognise my lotus-eyed beloved when you behold her. For her in my absence the whole big city would be like a dense forest, and the golden house like a cave. The floral bed would be as hard as a big rock and the lamps would frighten her like the gems on the hoods of snakes. She might be eating only half a leaf or so. And in the tree of her body is the abode of the gods.

(41)

## Selections

GOLULANATHA UPADHYAYA

*Amritodayam* is an allegorical play illustrating the ills of the *samsara* that *jivatman* has to undergo from the Creation through the Annihilation. Its author, Gokulanatha Upadhyaya (Gokulanātha Upādhyāya, 1650-1740) was the court-poet first of Fatteh Shah, a ruler of Srinagar, upto 1699, and later of King Raghavasimha of Mithila (1700-1739). He was a prolific writer and a formidable scholar of *Navya-Nyaya*. He penned some 54 works: of these *Amritodayam* and *Muditamadālasam* (dealing with the marriage of Madalasa with Kuvalayashra) are dramas; *Ekavali* is on prosody; *Shivashataka* and *Kundakadambari* are poems.

## 1

## The Rise of Nectar

## A

Leave Lakshmi  
the fickle goddess of fortune;  
give up those divine wish-fulfilling trees;  
O heart ! what purpose will be served by your desire  
for *chintamani*  
the wish-fulfilling gem ?  
For if they could quench the fire of appetite,  
they would have extinguished the fire  
raging within the ocean,  
their progenitor.

I walk about in the sky putting my feet on the feet of men reflected  
upside down in the sky resembling flights of crystal steps deceiving the eye.

When the lovely objects to which attachment grows perish, the result is  
grief. Therefore, it is proper for a man to get attached to you, the loveliest of  
all. For, you are not an object of grief resulting from attachment.

Better to be born as a jackal  
in lovely Vrindavana;  
let Gotama<sup>1</sup>, the fool, attain salvation  
as defined by Gotama<sup>2</sup>, the philosopher.

---

1. A foot of the worst type.

2. The profounder of the Nyaya system of Philosophy.

Like the seeds bursting from a ripe pomegranate the flames of fire emanating from the womb of the sea at the time of the Deluge break from the middle of the universe.

This eternal bliss with a lovely form, untouched by pain, was hidden inside the ignorant and could not be experienced by men. When, through asceticism by *sannyasa*, the fruits of all deeds are extinguished and ignorance is wiped out by knowledge, the blessed man, possessing no other wealth than internal bliss, experiences eternal salvation.

From *Amrtodayanataka*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

B

An enemy is harmful. An assailant assails. The unwise are also afraid of their second. For me, with my dedication, heart and soul to you the Omnipresent, there is no enemy, no fear nor even a second. (1:12)

Your divine Consciousness reflected in me brings about consciousness in me, despite my insentient form. The rays of the sun reflected in those of the moon bring about light, even during the night. (1:28)

The glow of the lamp increases just before it is extinguished. The darkness which enters through the outer room is gushing out of the chimney. It appears that the house, like a patient of Vedic deficiency, is taking recourse to smoking therapy through the smoking pipe and discharging smoke outside. (III:12)

Illusion shall certainly vanish on its own, soon after purushottama by virtue of spiritual powers attained firstly by perception and then by inference. (III:27)

I just cannot comprehend the magnanimity of yours who happen to be the Supreme bearer of the eggs of several worlds. I am like a small insect born inside a small fig, which cannot know about the bigness of the fig. tree with big branches. (IV:3)

O Lord,, I am not able to know even myself, even while you as the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance are shining throughout the universe. Verily the owl becomes blind during the day-time even while the summer-sun is shining with its scorching heat. (IV:4)

For an enlightened person, intellectual excellence, bodily strength, the pleasing objects and sense organs as well as pleasure itself are all considered

to be sources of miseries. Only liberation shining with its light of knowledge of the self is to his liking. (V:12)

From *Amritodayanataka*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by G. Panda

2

Three Stanzas

The father kisses the foot-prints of Madalasa on the sands with both the lips stretched wide apart and touches them with his closed lotus-hand. He does not press them with his embrace, for fear that they may be wiped out.

Seeing you, (though) bold in breaking the hands of respectable ladies, cry hidden for fear of a man challenging you at your door-step and Aditi (the mother of gods) smiling, Danu (the mother of demons), with her crest fallen in shame, pierces her womb, the root of her unworthy son, with hot needles of tears.

No god knows the sweetness of nectar but Lord Shiva who drank poison and was happy with a piece of the moon on his head. No god knows the ecstasy of amorous union with his wife but Lord Shiva who, after experiencing separation from Dakshayani, was satisfied with the half-body of Parvati.

From *Muditamadalsanataka*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

The Marriage of Sevantika

CHOKKANATHA

SEVANTIKAPARINAYAM (Sevantikāpariṇayam) is a play written by Chokkanatha (Cokkanātha, 17th-18th century) who flourished under the royal patronage of the Nayaks of Tanjore and who must have lived at least for a few years in the country of the king Shahaji, 1684-1710.

The play, in five acts, deals with the marriage of Sevantika, the princess of Kerala, with Basavabhupala.

Two gnomic verses are presented below :

The Madhavi creeper looks like my beloved with its bunch of flowers like the middle part of her body. Its leaves are as tender as herself sprung from the branches, bent down as she appears slightly bent due to heaviness of her breasts and its branches like her out-stretched hands. (III:9)

Even though she is portrayed in a picture, she attracts my mind as her

cheek rises and becomes enchanting on account of her smile; the middle portion of her body bends due to heavy breasts and she looks at me with quivering eyes. (V:6)

From *Sevantikaparinayam*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by G. Panda

## Aphorisms

### MALLARI ARADHYA

SHIVALINGASURYODAYAM (Śivalīngasūryodayam) is an allegorical drama with its allegory based on philosophical concepts. Its author, Mallari Aradhyā (Mallāri Ārādhyā, 18th century) was the son of the Chaganta family. This play in five acts is intended to establish the supremacy of the Virashaiva religion. The author composed it in honour of Basaveshvara of the Kandaruru family.

Some of the wise sayings from this play are given below :

#### 1

It is only those who are deprived of intelligence and courage that take recourse to oblations to Fire, the recital of the Vedas, the carrying of the three sacred staves and the besmearing of the body with the ashes as a means of livelihood; says Lord Brihaspati. (II:30)

#### 2

Even an aesthetically deficient utterance earns admiration, if presented at an appropriate time. Howsoever aesthetically brilliant an utterance may be, it does not command the same admiration, if presented at an inappropriate moment; this is like a Vedic recital at the time of making love with an accomplished beloved. (V:19)

#### 3

Appropriate punishment is prescribed even for a guru who, misled by his vanity, fails to distinguish Good from Evil and takes recourse to an undesirable way of life. (I:29)

#### 4

A wise man must not lose time with regard to a noble cause about to fructify, a youthful loving wife and the harvesting of the ripe crops. (IV:34)

## 5

Even a weak enemy can be a source of trouble to the king, like a small dust particle causing great discomfort to the eyes. (II:31)

## 6

Silence is the only automatic and absolutely effective cover of foolishness, made by the Creator Himself, especially in the context of the assembly of the learned. (IV:10)

From *Shivalingasuryodayam*, 18th century

Tr. by G. Panda

## Selections

VISHVESHVARA PANDE

## 1

### The Story of Mandaramanjari

MANDARAMANJARIKATHA (Mandāramanjarīkathā) is a prose romance written on the lines of Bana's *Kadambari*. Vishveshvara Pande, the author, lived at Almora in the first half of the 18th century. He is one of the last great luminaries in the tradition of classical Sanskrit literature. He is known to have written about twenty works in Sanskrit, including at least four treatises in poetics, a work on grammar, a compendium of 757 (or 762) in original arya verses, one *Shatakakavya* and *Mandaramanjarikatha*.

The plot of this *katha* is set in Pataliputra, modern Patna, where the great emperor, Rajasekhara, once ruled. The passage selected here describes the baby prince, son of the emperor.

The little prince was sucking the breast of his mother. His lips joined on the tip of the bosom looked like the petals of the bandhujiva flower being kissed by a bee. The parents were free from sorrows at his sight, like the chataka birds rejoicing on the arrival of the monsoon. An auspicious thread was tied around one of his wrists like the lotus fibre around the lotus. At the touch of the little prince, the body of the queen bloomed like a bunch of flowers in the hands of King Nala<sup>1</sup>. When the baby put one of his palms over the bosom of his mother, while sucking the milk, he looked like the morning sun casting a ray over a golden lotus. Sometimes encircled by the sparkling rays of the ornaments and stones worn by the queen, he looked like the baby Karna inside the box.<sup>2</sup> When he manipulated the breast of his mother,

1. King Nala was given a boon that flowers would remain ever fresh in his hands.

2. Immediately after his birth Karna was placed in a box made of precious stones by his unwed mother Kunti and forsaken to be floating on the waters.

out of his desire to suck, he seemed like Krishna ready to uplift the Govardhana mountain. When surrounded by the rays shooting from the smile of the queen, he gave the impression of a lion-cub lost in the mane of the lioness. Sometimes he caught one of the fingers of his father and sucked it like the child Mandhata sucking the finger of Indra. Once when adorned with a chain of precious padmaraga stones, he shone like Dhrishtadyana emerging out of the fire of the sacrificial altar.

Sometimes he would snatch the chain of white pearls from the neck of his mother and appear like Bhishma following the Ganga. At another time, he would resemble Kartikeya<sup>1</sup> as his face was reflected in several precious stones on the breast of his mother. Sometimes his victorious father lavished affection on him like Arjuna on Abhimanyu. Sometimes he sparkled with delight like Arjuna being looked at with affection by the daughter of Shura (Kunti). When people observed the one tooth sprouting in his mouth, he resembled Ganesha. At other times, while crying, he looked like Jayanta, the son of Lord Indra. Sometimes in the lap of *sumitras* or good friends, he looked like Lakshmana in the lap of Sumitra. He was being looked after by physicians like Parikshita.<sup>2</sup>

As the time went by, the king saw his son with the foster-mother. He saw him being called by his first name by his mother with her arms stretched. Then he saw him crawling on his knees. He could be seen glancing at the king with his eyes sparkling with love. When he smiled, he displayed his only tooth like the bud of kunda flower. His forehead sparkled with the mustards of golden colour. He would stop at the sight of his own reflection in the precious stones on the floor and try to make conversation with his own reflection. His hand and feet were of the colour of the beak of a parrot and the flowers of palasha; thus he was like the onset of the spring season. He was protected by the nails of panchanana (lion), like Skanda protected by Panchanana (Shiva). When he put his hands on the earth it was like the morning sun casting his rays on the earth. Seeing his son like this, the king believed himself to be on top of the whole world.

From *Mandaramanjari*, 18th century

Tr. by Radhavallabh Tripathi

## 2

### One Hundred and One Verses on the Hair

This collection of a hundred and one verses called *Romavalishatakam* (Romāvāliśatakam) is about the hair around the navel of women. This hair was supposed to excite desire in the hearts of men.

1. Son of Shiva. He has six heads.

2. Parikshita was a Pandava king, who was carefully looked after by physicians when he was predicted to die.



Filled with oil and burning continuously, a lamp collects soot beneath it. I think that in the same way, the darkness collected beneath your heart filled with affection and burning with desire is being given the name of *romavali* or the line of fine hair. (12)

Lord Rama had to build a bridge over the ocean in order to destroy Ravana. I believe that in the same manner, the god of love has also built a bridge of fine hair over the ocean of your graciousness in order to put an end to your childhood. (39)

By making this line of fine hair, the god of love has produced such a wonderful ointment possessing the power of captivating people that when it is applied to the eyes they cannot see anything beside this. (42)

It appears that the sister of Balarama, river Yamuna, has taken the form of the line of fine hair in order to cool that heat in the heart of the god of love which was produced by the flashing of the third eye in the forehead of Lord Shiva. (84)

O my bewitching-eyed beloved, I have this belief that after the burning of the god of love by Lord Shankara, Lord Brahma created this line of fine hair to win over the hearts of young people. (88)

From *Romavalishatakam*, 18th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The Gem of Aesthetic Pleasure

### VENIDATTA

RASAKAUSTUBHA (Rasakaustubha) by Venidatta (Veṇīdatta, 18th century) is a commentary on Bhaṇudatta's *Rasatarangini*, a 14th-15th century treatise on the *rasa* concepts in Sanskrit poetics.

Who are you ?

I am *chakri* Krishna, a serpent.

Go to your abode, there is no place here for a serpent.

I am *Gopala* Krishna, a cowherd.

There is a station for cowherds near the forest; go there.

I am *Padmesh* Krishna, the sun.

The hot-raged sun does not move about on the earth.

May Lord Krishna, outwitted by Radha,  
protect you and fulfil your desire !

I did not worship the gods even once, O Lord Vishnu,  
 neither did I sing your glory  
 nor drink the sweet water of the divine river Ganga.  
 Engrossed in amorous dalliance with my beloved,  
 I, though well-versed in all branches of learning,  
 do not know what is there stored for me in future.  
 O fair-faced lady ! this is not the cool-rayed moon,  
 the dispeller of darkness  
 and the remover of the extreme agony of the whole world,  
 shining in the sky in the evening.  
 Alas ! I surmise  
 this is the gold umbrella of the god of love  
 who is proceeding to kill damsels separated from their lovers.

From *Rasakaustubha*, 18th century

Tr. by Triloknath Jha

## Two Stanzas

### KASHIPATI

KASHIPATI (kāśīpati, 18th century) is the author of the bhana *Mukundanada* (Mukundānanada). Two excerpts are given below :

i

### The Divine Courtesan

The middle part of my mistress is the abode of Vishnu; it is invisible. Her waist is very slender. Her breasts are the abode of Lord Shiva; they are as round and smooth as the Shivalinga. Her face is the abode of Lord Brahma. Her tresses are the refuge of the gods as well as of flowers. Her hips are adorned with ornaments and look like the city of Kanchi. Her voice is sweet; her lower lip bears the burden of the sky, and her body is the playground of the gods. What more can be said of her divineness ? She is forever revered even by the gods.

ii

### The Divine Flute

O Krishna ! your flute acts like a messenger to call your mistresses to the rendezvous. It is well-versed in singing the love-songs. It is your playful antics. By kissing your red under-lip incessantly, it is your ultimate beloved. It speaks with many voices because of being held in your hand.

From *Mukundananda*, 18th century

Tr. by Sudershan Gera

## The House of Aesthetic Pleasure

YUVARAJAKAVI

YUVARAJAKAVI (Yuvarājakavi, 1800-1851), alias Godavarman Yuvaraja, is the author of *Rasasadana* (Rasāsadana) a *bhāna* or one-act monologue play with a single character. Below are given three excerpts from this play: the first describes the dress code of the dandies of the time, the second the condition of love-sick hero, and the third, the glory of the full moon.

1

### The Foremost among Dandies

I am wearing two gold-bordered full-length garments made of white, soft and fine threads. I have also carelessly thrown on my shoulder a folded, silken upper garment of vermilion hue, printed with circles. I have painted my forehead with deer-musk. On my fingers I wear golden rings. I have moistened my armpits with sandal-paste. Thus I have become the foremost among dandies.

2

### The Fever of Passion

I have drunk the curative mixture of your lips which tasted like a concoction of grapes, bananas, honey, jaggery and sugar put together in the urn of the moon filled with nectar. But the truth is that even after taking this medicine, the fever of my passion is not subsiding; it is rising.

A water-lily gives her heart only to the moon, and the moon also does not fall in love with anybody except the water-lily. The spring creeper finds fulfilment in climbing a mango tree. The relationship of a lotus and the sun is praiseworthy. In the same way, the married life of a couple can only be happy when they are possessed of similar qualities.

3

### Glory of the Full Moon

Victory to the full moon ! For the gods, this moon is like a life-giving potion. It makes the oceans swell. It also puts an end to the rage of angry mistresses. For the lilies it is a clown which brings smiles to their faces. For darkness, it is a magician which makes it disappear. Like a swan, it swims across the lake of the night sky. For human beings it is the ointment which gives pleasure to the eyes.

# Medieval Sindhi Literature

## Tales With Verses

ANONYMOUS

GAHUN (Ġāhūn) is a form of poetry very popular with the minstrels and bards. *Ġahuni Sān Ġāthiyūn* (Tales with verses) come under champu literature in Sindhi. These stories interspersed with verses (Ġāhūn) are known to have been composed by anonymous authors sometime between 1026 and 1524 during the Sumra rule (1026-1352) and Samma rule (1352-1524). These tales remained solely in the memory of the minstrels and bards and were passed on from generation to generation through oral tradition. Only four specimens are given here in abridged form selected from *Gahuni San Galhiyun* which contains 40 such tales. Many of these tales come under heroic literature, as they depict the heroic exploits of the kings and warriors of those times.

The four tales are *Sonal* (Sōnal), *Chando Ain Gangraj* (Cāṇḍo Ain Gangrāj), *Sabar Ain Nuran* (Sābar Ain Nūrān) and *Unaru Unarani* (Unaṛu Unaṛānī).

### I

#### Sonal

It is said that once upon a time there lived a beautiful girl with golden hair in a hamlet with her seven brothers. Because she had long and golden hair, the folks called her by the name of Sonal. All her seven brothers were very sturdy. They would go to their work in the morning and return in the evening. She would attend to the household chores during the day in their absence.

While flying over this hamlet one day, a big giant saw Sonal. Immediately he fell in love with her, and descended on the earth. Seeing the giant advancing towards her, she was gripped by fear, but, gathering courage, she said, "You gaint, why have you come here? Get away from here, or else my brothers will tear you limb by limb." The giant laughed and said, "You stupid girl, no one can ever dare even to touch me. Speak not that way. Come, let's sit together and talk about sweet things."

Ṣonal panicked. She was scared to answer him. The giant said, "Marry me. I shall make you happy for ever." But Sonal refused. He got angry. He

closed the outer door, sewed her eyes with thread and needle, and tied her to a pillar with her hair, and slept on her knees. In the evening, when her brothers returned, they knocked at the door and said:

Sister Sonal, Sister Sonal, open the door, light the lamp.  
Hearing her brother's voice, she said:  
Brother, O brother, eyes are sewn with needle,  
Hair is tied to a pillar, giant sleeps on knees.

Hearing of the giant, they got scared. They feared that if they went inside, the giant would kill them. They went away and slept for the night elsewhere.

Next day they returned in the evening and with dread in their mind, they called :

Sister Sonal, sister Sonal, open the door, light the lamp.  
Hearing their voice, she gave them the same reply:  
Brother, O brother, eyes are sewn with needle,  
Hair is tied to a pillar, giant sleeps on knees.

Hearing her reply, the brothers again went away without uttering a word. This way, coming daily and then going away, a period of six months elapsed. They realised that the giant also slept for six months, and kept awake for the same period. His sleeping period was also coming to an end.

Brothers thought that as soon as the giant woke up, he would take Sonal away. Realizing this, they regretted that they would never get a sister like Sonal again. The only way out was to kill the giant somehow and save Sonal. And then, even if they died in the fight, it mattered little. They would only sacrifice their lives for their sister. Planning their strategy, they returned with axes and clubs. Knocking at the door, they said to their sister:

Sister Sonal, sister Sonal, Open the door, light the lamp.  
Sonal thought over it and replied in weak voice:  
Brother, O brother, eyes are sewn with needle,  
Hair tied to a pillar, giant sleeps on knees.

Hearing her voice they were sure that the giant was still asleep. They broke open the door and entered the house. They pounced on the giant like beasts and killed him. They freed Sonal and spent their lives in peace.

*II*

## Chando and Gangraj

King Suraj ruled over a certain country. His queen was called Gangraj. Gangraj was in love with Chando, her husband's prime minister. Only her faithful maid knew about this affair. The maid was very discreet and wise, and therefore, none else knew anything about the queen's love affair. They couldn't meet in the presence of the king. They always looked for a chance for the rendezvous.

One day, confiding in the maid, the queen sent her to Chando to tell him to work out a plan for taking away the king for a big game. On the way he should complain of severe stomach ache and return, and this way they would get a chance for love-making. Chando liked the plan and gave the king a proposal for hunting expedition. The king was fond of hunting and he readily concurred in the proposal. A day was fixed for the hunting expedition to leave and he gave orders for the preparations.

After a few days, the king and the minister set out on the hunting expedition with a contingent of the army. After completing one lap of expedition, Chando complained of shooting stomach ache. He fell from the horse and writhed with pain. Observing his condition, the king said, "Now that we have already covered one lap of hunting, it wouldn't be proper to go back. Let the minister go back to the city for treatment." And he proceeded further on his expedition.

The minister wanted the things to happen this way. Pretending severe ache, groaning and moaning, he returned, and went straight to the palace. The maid, who was looking his way, whisked him away avoiding people, and through the secret door, brought him to the queen. The queen and the minister were happy, they sat together on the swing and made love to each other to their heart's content. And the night descended on their love-making.

When the king returned from the day's hunting, and entered his tent dead tired, he felt handicapped without the minister's company. He called his men and said, "Today we are within our territory. Tomorrow, if we enter an alien territory, people will laugh at us finding no minister with us. I think we should go back to the city right now." Who would speak against the king's wishes? Everyone agreed and they set out on their journey to the city.

Chando and Gangraj were in each other's arms when the king arrived at the gate of his palace. The maid was in panic. She thought that if she didn't put the queen and the minister on guard, both would lose their lives. And if she tried to stop the king from going into the palace on one pretext or the

other, he would get suspicious. Standing there, looking at the palace, she recited a *bayt*:

Chandi and Gangraj, both sharing longing,  
The nectar of love they are gulping,  
Chanda, hide yourself now, or face Suraj at the door.

Hearing the maid's *bayt*, Chando and the queen concluded that the king had arrived. Both were scared to the bone. In haste Gangraj rolled the minister within the folds of the bed and placed the roll in the corner. She, then, sat down all composed expecting the king.

The king was surprised when he heard the maid's *bayt*, and could not comprehend its import. Suspicion, however, lurked in his mind, the suspicion that Chando, misguiding him, had come to share his love with Gangraj. He called the maid and asked as to what she meant by that *bayt*. She said, "O gracious king, I had gone to the lake outside the city last night to offer worship. I saw there the reflection of the moon on the surface of water. I liked this kind of meeting. But then, I thought their meeting was only for a few hours, for, in the morning, when the sun would rise, they would separate from each other. That is why I recited the *bayt*."

Chandi and Gangraj both share longing,  
The nectar of love they are gulping,  
Chanda, hide yourself now, or face Suraj at the door,

The king accepted the maid's explanation. He went into the palace to see the queen. The queen trembled a little seeing him. The maid understood her predicament and thought that if a slight movement in the bed or the minister's slight whimper attracted the attention of the king, it would prove disastrous. In order to put Chando on guard, she recited another *bayt*:

Don't be so sad, why do you quiver,  
Inhale you the fragrance of flowers,  
Why afraid of death should you be?

Hearing the *bayt*, the minister's shivering stopped, but the king's suspicion increased. "There ought to be something queer," he thought. Looking around, he couldn't, however, place his suspicion on anything.

When Chando's mother came to know that he was in the palace, and that the king had also returned, she was enveloped in a kind of fear, fear that the life of her son was in danger. To know the things for herself, she went around the palace. When the maid saw her, she thought that if the king saw her, they all would land in prison. She recited another *bayt* from there:

Why do you hiss so loudly, you lost him last night,  
When the dawn breaks, you will meet yours.

Chando's mother heard this and thought that Chando was safe, and she returned home.

Hearing the strange *bayt* recited by the maid, the king reflected that there were secrets which the maid was hiding. He called her and asked her what her *bayt* conveyed. The maid folded her hands and with respect explained, "O king, at sunset, after finishing my worship, when I passed by your garden, I saw a big black bee inhaling the fragrance of the sunflower. As the sun set, the petals of the flower closed, enclosing the black bee within. When I saw it trying to free itself, I could not but laugh, but at the same time I was vexed, and so I said:

Don't be so sad, why do you quiver?  
Inhale you the fragrance of flowers,  
Why afraid of death should you be?

"I was still there when I saw a female black bee hovering over the flower and hissing. I thought it must be the black bee's mother. That is why I said:

Why do you hiss loudly, you lost him last night,  
When the dawn breaks, you will meet yours.

The king was satisfied with the wise maid's explanation and said to her, "Ask whatever you want. It will be granted to you." The maid requested, "O king, whatever you have already given me is enough. The only desire I have nursed in my life has been to sleep once in royal bed. If you want to give me something, please grant me your bed to sleep in for the night." The king said, "That's what you want? Take it."

The maid thanked him and took away the bedding inside which lay the minister rolled. In her home she unrolled it and freed the minister, who, expressing gratitude for having saved his life, went home.

One day the king sent a message to Gangraj: "Adorn yourself tonight and come to me." The queen was happy and she started her make-up. When she searched for the sandalwood necklace, she found it missing. She, then, remembered to have put it round the neck of the minister that evening. And now if the king didn't see it, what would he do, she knew not. When she was sitting immersed in these thoughts, the faithful maid appeared. Seeing her so forlorn, she asked her for the reason. The queen told her the story. The maid solaced her and went to the court.

The court was full and Chando was also there. The maid paid her respects and said:

Adornment of Suraj, Chando has sandalwood necklace  
Moon be blessed with moonlight in the court of the king.



Chando understood the import of the couplet. He secretly removed the necklace from inside his shirt, and wrapping it in a hand kerchief, threw it at the maid, and said:

Maid, moon was blessed yesterday, come you have today,  
This is also your gift, accept the moon's congratulations.

That day was the second night of the moon, and none understood its import. That way the hint of the love of Chando and Gangraj remained undisclosed.

After a few days, the king died. Minister Chando married queen Gangraj, and became king of the country. They lived their lives happily and in love for ever.

*Chando Ain Gangraj*, 11th-14th century

*Tr.* by Param Abichandani

### III

#### Sabar and Nuran

Once upon a time in the village of Maruwai near Âmarkot, there lived a person named Sabar. Taking his cattle every year, he would go to Nagarparkar, a small town in the Tharparkar district of Sindh. His relatives lived in the village around this town. Once, during the rains, Sabar set out on his journey along with his cattle to meet his relatives. On the way to Nagarparkar, when he was passing through the village of Mudri, he saw in a field a beautiful belle driving away the birds. She was a real beauty. The name of the bird-driver was Nuran. Her voice was so sweet that Sabar found himself glued to one place, and he kept staring at her. Thoughts of so many kinds invaded his mind. First he thought of going away, preserving the memory of the sweet girl, but the beauty of the svelte belle magnetized him. At last, gathering courage, he said:

O friend on the scaffolding, be kind to this traveller,  
Allow me to taste the sweet ears in your field.

Hearing Sabar's voice, Nuran looked at him and wondered who this kinship-raising person was. She replied;

O hopeful of getting sweet grains, open your ears and listen.  
Even we haven't tasted these ears; how can a traveller taste them?

Sabar heard the reply given in bad taste. He was silent for a moment. Thinking over it, he said:

You put your hand in it, and the abstinence is broken,  
then eat everything,

I demand only those grains that are sweeter than the  
ears of corn.

The import of his malafide intentions dawned on Nuran. She laughed and then reprimanding him, said:

You talk too much, O boy, what's it you are talking about?  
Take your path and go, and hope not for anything.  
Seeing Nuran enveloped by ire, he tried to mollify her and said:  
The one who nurses hope, go away how can he?  
Don't be vexed, be kind, create not any distance.

Nuran thought over it for a few moments and concluded that the man wouldn't give in so easily. Just to make him understand, she said, "O boy, don't talk to me like that. People will hear and carry tales, and I shall lose my respect. Now, it will do you some good if you leave here silently. Speak in that language to those who love you." But Sabar said, "Go away I shall not. . . I am enticed by your beauty. Now be kind and be reconciled with this poor man."

Nuran's anger subsided. Dismounting from the perch, she went over to him and said, "Why are you taunting me?" "Sabar said, "I am not. I only entreat you to be kind to this helpless man." Nuran couldn't stop laughing. She said:

Difference there is a lot between saying and practising,  
Having the strength of a *Tola*<sup>1</sup>, call not yourself a *Seer*<sup>2</sup>.  
Sabar said in reply:  
Before you, beloved, even though a *Manu*<sup>3</sup>, I am a *Maso*<sup>4</sup>  
Give this miserable heart, O beloved, a kind of solace.

The dialogue increased their intimacy. Love struck roots in their hearts. From that day they met there and spoke sweet nothings to each other.

A day came when people happened to know about their love affair. . . . . When Nuran's parents learned about it, they thought that their reputation was at stake. The first thing that they did was to confine Nuran in the house and then engaged themselves in search of a suitable match for her. Nuran would weep the whole day. She was not able to bear the pangs of separation from her beloved. She longed for meeting him somehow, but her parents prevented her from leaving the house. Her friends could not bear her condition and advised her: "Nuran, nothing will happen even if you weep out your life. Do nothing. Only obey the command of Providence."

Sabar was in no better mood. He would go to the place of their meeting everyday and spend long hours there only to return in despair,

After a few days, Nuran was married off, and, hearing the news, Sabar felt miserable. One day, disguised as a *Jogi*, he went to Nuran's place and called. Hearing his voice, she recognized him. She ran to him and fell at his feet. Seeing Nuran falling at the feet of a stranger, the members of the household ran after her. They took her inside and tied her to a cot. They beat Sabar mercilessly and made him write on a copy of the *Quran* that he would never again visit Mudri. After this incident, Sabar never visited Nuran, and like a mendicant, he wandered from village to village. He composed *bayts* in memory of Nuran and singing them in his wanderings, he died. When Nuran hear about his death, she merely annihilated herself by weeping and thus died.

*Sabar Ain Nuran*, 11th-14th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

#### IV

#### Unaru Unarani

Samma Jam Unaru was a ruler of Sindh. He had two sons named Muharu and Manai. Jam Unaru lived in Samoi. In those days *Ano* was in practice. *Ano* used to be done like this: The bridegroom, who for certain reasons, was not able to go to the bride's house, would send his sword to his bride. She would be married to the sword, and then she would go to her husband and deliver the sword back to him. An *Ani* (bride married to a sword) started her journey from Jhalawar in Gujarat to meet her husband. Her sister-in-law or husband's sister accompanied her in a palanquin.

After they traversed some distance, she asked her sister-in-law, "Who is the ruler of this place?" She replied, "Jam Unaru is the ruler of this place." After traversing some more distance, the bride asked her sister-in-law, "Who is the ruler of this place?" She replied, "Jam Unaru is the ruler of this place." She said again, "You are asking again and again about Jam Unaru. Have you fallen in love with him?" Hearing this reproach, the bride jumped out of the palanquin and said, "Now I shall go to Jam Unaru." The sister-in-law was surprised and tried to make the bride see reason, but the bride refused to proceed further. Drawing the sword from the sheath, she prepared herself for a fight. The persons in the marriage party tried to make her understand, but the bride refused to oblige. The marriage party left without the bride. She, then, sent a message to Jam Unaru: I have come all adorned for you. Come and take me away from here." At that time Jam Unaru was a hundred years old and infirm. He thought he was very old, but he asked his sons to clothe themselves in saffron-coloured attire, and then go and bring the adorned bride. Muharu and Manai went to fetch the bride. She received the sons and they brought their mother home.

She ordered seven buffaloes to be brought. The order was carried out. She would milk six buffaloes and give their milk to the seventh buffalo. Then she would milk the seventh buffalo and give the milk to Jam Unaru to drink. Within six months he saw himself getting young. In order to test the vitality of her husband, she held the race of mares in the field. While the sons could hold the mares, her husband couldn't. The process was continued for six more months. The king became very strong and could hold the running mare. Virility had returned to him.

She gave birth to a son after some time. As the child was not expected keeping his age in view, he named the child after his name. Later, he became famous as Unaru Unarai. His father died when he was twelve years old. Three brothers were just setting out to bury the dead body of their father, when their mother stopped young Unaru from going. When the funeral passed out of the castle, she got the main gate closed. When Muharu and Manai returned after the burial of their father was over, they found the gate closed. They smelled death. They thought this to be a prelude to it. They ran away to Kutch where their maternal uncle, Waghman Chavaro, ruled. He ruled over the territories of Mondhan and Atri. He was suspicious of his nephews. To test their trust he took them to a temple of Kutesar Devata for taking an oath. The brothers caught two young sparrows and tied them on their girdle. Then they circumambulated the deity seven times clockwise and seven times anti-clockwise and vowed "O our deity Kutesar, in the presence of these beings we take oath that we shall not betray our maternal uncle." He realized that they spoke the truth. They asked him to prove that he would also not betray them. He repeated the ritual and bowed his head before the deity. In a flash Manai chopped off his head with the sword. He then proclaimed himself the ruler of the state.

The seven Sandh brothers ruled together over the territory of Goere. Waghman paid them tax as their protege every six months. When they heard that Muharu and Manai, after killing their uncle, have usurped his country, they wrote to the two brothers that if they were prepared to pay the tax, they would be recognised as rulers. If not, they should be prepared for war. The two brothers agreed to pay the tax on the condition that they would not send the carts of fodder every six months, as Waghman used to do, but every year. Hearing this the seven brothers were happy and invited the two brothers to a dinner. They went there and studied the customs obtaining there. At midday when the water-wheel started working, in order to ease their limbs, the seven brothers would untie their weapons and retire to their rooms to rest. When, after a few hours, the water-wheel stopped working, they would get up.

After a year, loading the fodder over the brave young men hiding in many carts, Maharu and Manai sent them to the Sandh brothers in payment of the tax. A blind man was sitting by the side of the gate of the fort. He was a wise person. Without his permission nothing went inside the fort and nothing could be brought out of it. Maharu and Manai went to him and sought his permission to take the goods inside the fort. The blind man asked them, "Is it fodder in the carts, or vegetables, or dried beans?"

Maharu and Manai said, "You blind man, what do you know? The carts are loaded with fodder."

They killed him with the sword, threw him in the cart and covered his body with fodder. The carts were pushed inside the fort. The seven brothers distributed the carts among themselves. When the sun was on the top, the carts distributed were brought to each brother. To keep up to the plans already worked out, the servants delayed the unloading. In the meantime the water-wheel started working and the seven brothers retired to their rooms. The young fighters hiding in the carts came out and attacked the house and brought it under their control. All the seven brothers were killed. Now the boundaries of the country of Maharu and Manai expanded. The territory of Sandhan used to be called 'Mak', which was a part of Kutch. Now from Mak to Kund, the entire area came under their sovereignty.

Muharu said, "Now, let's divide the country." The country was distributed in three parts. One part went to Muharu, the other to Manai, and the third they said they would give away in the name of God. That corner part was in the province of Sindh called Kakrali. Manai said, "We shall not give that part of the country in charity to anyone else, but I shall take it in charity." After Manai that part remained with Kehars, his children. It was then that the frontiers of the countries of Manai and Unarai met there. But the Kehar brothers could not keep up good relations among themselves. Muharu tried hard to bring them together, but could not succeed.

Muharu died without leaving any children. He was a God-fearing ruler and the subjects built a big mausoleum on his grave. His kingdom was called Muharasu. His mausoleum exists even today in the village Muharu Qubo. After his death, Manai's sons annexed Muharasu to their kingdom.

Unaru Unarai respected his brother, but Manai never cared for him. He was called the despot Jam of Kakrali. Manai had two sons, Adho and Budho. Once a *charan* visited him and asked for a buffalo in charity, but he refused. The *charan* said :

Buffaloes are big things, difficult to give,  
But, O Jam of Kakrali, you take *kakhyun*, (buffaloes) for lions.

Hearing this, he thought it was his disgrace. He asked the *charan* to change the composition of the *bayt* and take away the buffalo. *Charan* changed the *bayt* in such a way that the word "Kakiyun" became "Kodiyun" (small shells used as coins).

Buffaloes are big things difficult to give,  
But, O Jam of Kakrali, you take *kodiyun* as lions.

*Unaru Unarani*, 11th-14th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

## The Saga of Dodo and Chanesar

BHAGU BHAN

The folk-tale of *Dōdō ain Chanēsar*, based on *champu* tradition, was composed by Bhāgu Bhān in the 13th century, during the Sumra period ((1026-1352). The tale trickled down through the centuries by oral tradition before it was first recorded. The tale was also composed in verse called *Dodal Rāso*.

The tale is given here in an abridged form.

Over Ropal town ruled a king named Bhongar. Once he went out hunting. Passing through the lanes of the town, he saw a woman, a blacksmith, standing on the upper storey of a house. She was very beautiful, and the hunter fell a prey to the prey. He said to his minister that the svelte belle had snatched away his heart and peace of mind and that he should lure her to marry him. If he (the minister) didn't do that he would die in separation. The minister demanded her hand from her parents for the king. They thought that God was indeed kind to them as the king had demanded their daughter's hand. They happily accepted the proposal. The king already had a wife, but she stood nowhere in beauty in comparison with the blacksmith's daughter. Her skin was soft like the petals of rose, and her face shone like a lamp. She had big, deer's eyes, and her body was chiselled and agile. God was kind to her, and she conceived after a few days of her marriage to the king. After nine months and nine days she delivered a healthy male. They named him Chanesar. About that time the king's other wife also delivered a female who was named Baghi. His other wife conceived again and in due course delivered a male child who was named Dodo. Both the male children grew up together. They played and hunted together. When they came of age, Bhongar got Chanesar married to a girl out of the family class, and Dodo married a girl within the Sumra family.

After a few days both the newly wedded women conceived. Chanesar's wife delivered a male and that of Dodo a female. Chanesar's son was named Nagar and Dodo's daughter was named Koel.

The infants babble and take their steps,  
Do it that way the infants of the world,  
They look beautiful in the laps of their parents.

Once the blacksmith woman said to her husband Bhongar, "I shall live in luxury so long as you are alive. After your death, I know not how the Sumras of your class will treat the stranger woman and her children." Bhongar thought over the situation that might arise after his death, and in order to meet such an eventuality, he got Chanesar's son betrothed to Dodo's daughter. The king died after sometime, and it was a custom prevailing in those days that the dead body of the king would not be confined to earth till such time as a new king was proclaimed. And here the struggle for power ensued. The Sumras said that even though Dodo was younger, he belonged to the dynasty of Sumras, and therefore, he had every right to the throne. Others said that the eldest son always had the right to the throne, even though he might not belong to the class. And again, one of the ministers, Baranu, said that Baghi, the king's daughter, had every right to take her father's place. In that case it was her desire that counted, and she should decide whether Chanesar or Dodo be the next king. He then wrote to Baghi, asking her to decide about transfer of her right to the throne either to Chanesar or to Dodo. She wrote back that since Chanesar was the elder, the rulership should go to him. The letter was read out by minister Baranu to the Sumras in the court. They called Chanesar to the court.

Sit on the throne after your father, come Chanesar, come,  
It's good luck to you, praised be your mother who gave you birth.  
Said, then, Chanesar:  
You prepare for the soldiery, let me go home and come back,  
An elderly woman she is, let me ask my mother,  
The advice she renders, I shall accept happily.

Chanesar went to his mother to seek her advice. The assembly was in rage. "He is female-like. It would not be proper to hand over the reins of the country to such a weakling," was their view.

Where the Sodhas, Sumras, all people gather,  
The crown befits Dodo's head, beat the drums,  
Let people in the court of Dodo come.

Chanesar bowed and touched his mother's feet. He got up, folded his hands and said, "Mother, they are crowning me king. Shall I accept it or not?"

The mother patted on his back and said, "You are lucky, son. Accept it."

In the meantime, they heard the sound of the drums. The mother sent her maid to find out what it was all about. She came back and said that Dodo had been selected as the next king by the people. They are beating the drums in celebration. Weeping, the mother said to Chanesar:

I gave you birth as a son, you turned into a daughter dirty.  
Now sit in the yard and spin cops thirty,  
Advise you I, never out of the house you go.

Then Chanesar's wife said:

The aunt didn't explain to my husband rightly and free,  
Earlier two women we were here, we are now three,  
Sit in the yard and spin the cops  
Let you work in the house, you know not what rulership is.

The nurse, who had brought up Chanesar, said:

Turn the kettle-drums into earthen pans, break the spears  
and burn them as fuel,  
Sell you horses now, rear the herd of sheep,  
Reduce your mother to a milkmaid, go and in  
Dodo's court wander,  
Place a piece of black cloth on your shoulders,  
And graze the rams,  
What else can you do, you know not what rulership is.

These taunts and reproaches hurt Chanesar to the bone. In fury he said:

Mad with enmity am I, spread the net I shall  
I shall ensnare them all in it, the entire household,  
With jealousy I am burning, revenge I shall take.

His mother heaved a sigh of relief. She said again:

If you hammer hard, you reach the end,  
fire comes alive if you blow hard,  
Beware, lest nothing comes to your mind out of these two,  
Rue you will then, and repent helplessly for ever.

Sitting there, Chanesar sent a message to Dodo through his maid that he should hand over the reins of the kingdom to him:

After father's death, hand over, O Dodo, hand over  
the crown to me,  
The hordes of army I shall bring to take over the kingdom.

Dodo held discussions with his ministers and said, "Chanesar is my elder brother, and my daughter is married to his son. He is now offended. I am of the opinion that you all go to him, mollify him and hand over the reins of the country to him. I am afraid of a turmoil in the country. I don't want the rift to widen between two brothers." The ministers replied:



Treat not the crown as play, Dodo, after your father's demise,  
Don't give the rule to those who beg, give beans to oxen,  
They beseeched Dodo to have a regard for their stand.

The maid related the whole story to Chanesar. He got up and set out on his way to the court of Allauddin Gori. On the way he saw a goatherd sleeping under the shade of a tree. His stick moved about on its own to direct the animals, and his sword lay by his side. He thought that since his stick had so much miraculous power, his sword must be still more powerful. He thought of taking both the things with him. In the meantime the sword of its own came out of the sheath. Floating in the air, it made Chanesar its target. He was scared, and he raised his voice and shrieked. The goatherd got up. Chanesar introduced himself and explained his mission. The goatherd agreed to give him the sword.

Chanesar reached the outer gate of the city and found a giant-like guard. He took out his sword and threw it. The sword flew through the air and killed the guard. He entered the city and reached the place of the minister. He planned his visit to the court and his meeting with the king. The king was happy to receive him. Chanesar related his story to the king and also the purpose of his visit:

Father died and left behind women nine hundred and nine,  
For you I wanted to bring them here, but Dodo held them back,  
I have told my story, and to you leave I the rest.

The king could not control his ire. "Who is this Dodo who thinks he is so powerful?" He asked. He declared war against him and ordered his army to march.

When they reached the place of the goatherd, the sword on its own flew back to him. The army reached the outskirts of Ropah. There was an inn there called "Inn of Veram, Bahar Faqir", in which about five hundred faqirs lived. When they heard that Allauddin Gori's army had come to attack Dodo, their king, they got hold of the clubs, or whatever they could lay their hands on, and came out. They attacked the army and in the fight all of them died.

When the people saw that the king Allauddin Gori was accompanied by Chanesar, they sent his son, Nagar, to the king as emissary. He introduced himself as son of Chanesar, and related the purpose of his mission. The king was happy and asked him to hand over the rule of the country to Chanesar, and he would go back without asking for the payment of the losses sustained by him. Chanesar intervened, "It's so kind of you, O king, but how about the marriage of Baghi, Dodo's sister, to you?" The king demanded Baghi in marriage. Nagar said that the Sumras didn't give their daughters in marriage to other communities. If anyone other than a Sumra asked for it,

they would fight. The king got furious and asked his men to attack Nagar's army. A fierce battle followed. Nagar was killed and Chanesar sent his body to Ropah.

Allauddin sent his emissary, Nadir Malik, to Dodo with the message that he should either pay one lakh rupees a day as tax or fight. Dodo sought the advice of his ministers. Said Hyder Halani:

Says Hyder Halani, you didn't seek advice earlier,  
Now bear the suffering inflicted by your brother elder,  
Fight we shall with Allauddin, strike the swords we will,  
Fear not now, you brave one, give your head if it comes to that.

When Dodo's brother heard this news, he brought 140 Sodhas from Umarkot and said that he would first fight with Nadir Malik along with his Sodha generals. Sodho Hasso attacked Nadir Malk and both died fighting. Men of both sides ran away. The news spread to Allauddin and Dodo at the same time.

Seeing the bloodshed, Baghi asked Dodo to agree to the proposal of Allauddin. The council of ministers however rejected it. Dodo sent Bhag, the medicant, as emissary to Abro Abrani, the ruler of Kutch, to seek shelter for the women of the palace, if he entered the war. Abro readily agreed, and all women were sent to Abro's country.

The battle started. Dodo killed the enemies with a vengeance. When he was near Allauddin's defences, the king asked Chanesar who the warrior was. He was informed that he was Dodo. The king appreciated his bravery. When Dodo heard this, he retreated in appreciation of what the king said about him. Fierce battle continued and in the end Dodo was killed. His body was brought into the tent by Chanesar. He wept bitterly and said:

O Seven-armed Sumra, no blemish on you even after death,  
Let your mother raise her head with pride among the  
Sodhas and Sumras,  
The blood has turned the hue of your beard to red,  
A brave warrior you were, in the field now you lie dead.

Allauddin asked Chanesar to bring nine hundred women as promised. He got up and went away. When he entered the town of Ropah, he found it deserted. He came to know that all Sumra women were under the protection of Abro. He conveyed the news to the king who wrote to Abro, reminding him of their friendship and also promising to hand over to him the additional territories of Multan and Matheli, and asked him to send back all Sumra women.

The Samma king, Abro, refused to oblige the Muslim king Allauddin. Yet another battle was waged with Abro's son, Mamat, who had delivered his

message to Allauddin. Mamat spread havoc in Allauddin's army. Allauddin, then, sent Sayed Satar with one lakh fighters to fight with Mamat, who was also joined by his cousin, Sabar. A fierce battle ensued between Sabar's army and that of Sayed Satar. None survived. All were killed. Allauddin, then, came into the field himself. Abro was still preparing for war. The rulers of the countries around his borders, the Jarejas, also came to fight with Allauddin, but they were eliminated.

The war took rather heavy toll on both sides. In the battlefield, Mamat was also killed fighting. Now Abro realized that his own death was imminent. He fought valiantly and was wounded. As promised to the Sumris in his shelter, he went back to his fort to take the last breath. He called the Sumris and said:

Come, Sumris, my sisters, let's say goodbye,  
God is great, He will protect you all,  
Weeping bitterly, he breathed his last.

The Sumris now saw that there was no one to protect them. They raised their hands in prayer. The earth quaked and a crater appeared. The Sumris entered the crater. The earth quaked again and levelled.

They chopped off Abro's head and brought it to the king, who said:

The sky is high for everyone, none is higher than the sky,  
Even after death, O Abra, your head is held high,  
Bravo for you, up to the last you protected those in refuge.

Allauddin handed over the rule of the place to Abro's son Dungar Rao. Chanesar protested and engaged the king to fight. The battle brought destruction. Chanesar also died with so many others on both sides. Only Allauddin with seven lancers survived. He gave the reins of the country to Dungar Rao and returned to Delhi. On the way when he reached Mirpur Mathelo, a sudden thought provoked him. He reflected that he left Delhi with a huge army and now he was returning only with seven men. "How shameful; isn't death better than this shame". He dismounted. He ordered a mausoleum to be built there over his grave. When it was ready, he swallowed a *gori* or pill and killed himself. The seven lancers buried him there and stayed there as *Mujavars* or attendants at the tomb. For swallowing a *gori* to kill himself, he was called Allauddin Gori.

Only that will return to destination, whom God calls,  
Wisdom will dawn on him, even though foolish he may be,  
With him every moment will God be.

## The Saga of Sorath and Rai Diach

ANONYMOUS

This folk-tale appears to have been composed in the early Sumra period (1026-1352) by an anonymous author in *Champu* form interspersed with verses, and travelled down to the nineteenth century by oral tradition through minstrels and bards. This folk-tale is given here in an abridged form.

In Gimar ruled a king named Rai Diach. His sister beseeched an anchorite to grant her a boon. She desired to have a son born to her. Said the faqir, "You will be blessed with a son but he will cut the head of Rai Diach. Ordained so it is." She said, "Sir, I don't want a son who cuts my brother's head." But the anchorite had prophesied this. It could not be warded off. A few days later the woman delivered a male child. She put him in the box and put it in the river. She thought that he would be good food for the fish and the crocodiles. But he was not destined to be eaten away by the fish. The box floated on water and drifted to the village of the *charans* within the boundaries of the territory ruled over by the king Anerai. A charan and his wife had gone there to draw water and chanced to see the floating box. They brought it out of the stream, opened it and found the child inside. They took him home to bring him up. Time passed and he grew up. They gave him a herd of asses and horses and asked him to take them out for grazing. What else did the charans do after all? All the time they played on their fiddles and harps to lure the deer, kill it, roast it and eat it. The boy they nurtured was named Bijal. He only grazed the beasts and did no other work.

Some time ago, Ya Ali Sain, the wrestler of Madina, had killed a deer. He had skinned it and thrown away its intestines on a tree. He had grilled the animal and eaten it. Time passed and he passed away. Now, when the wind from the south blew, the intestines, which had dried and turned into strings, would vibrate in the gust and issue such musical notes that the animals and birds would gather to listen to the music. When the wind stopped blowing, the sound of music would cease, and the animals and birds would also depart. Once Bijal happened to be there. He picked up the stings from the tree. He made a harp and stringed it. Then he rubbed the bow on the glue on the tree and struck it against the strings, and beautiful music ensued. The sound of his music now attracted deer, other animals and birds four times more in number than before. He would catch two or three deer to take home. When the Charans saw the deer, they exclaimed, "Well, the river-god has given us a good earning son. We hardly bring a deer, and he brings so many. We will now help our neighbours, too." They married him to a charan's daughter.

The king Anerai had sixty daughters. One more daughter was born. He put her in a box and, placing a lot of gold and silver in it, put it in the river.

He had too many daughters, he reflected, and he didn't want any more. There was one potter named Ratno living in a village in the country ruled by Rai Diach. He drew the box out of the river. He lifted the child from the box and took her home to nurse and nurture her. She was named Sorath. Ratno and King Anerai were good friends. Once he stayed with him for many days. One day, he sought his permission to go. "Permit me to go to my village. I shall return after two months." But now, four months had already elapsed, but Ratno had not gone to king Anerai. The king said to his guards, "When Ratno, the potter, comes here, I shall hold a meeting with him. You kill him at that time."

Potter Ratno said to his wife, "I have seen Anerai in my dreams. Now I shall go to him.":

"You are going there, but he will have you killed," she said.

He said, "Even then I shall go there."

He mounted the horse and set out on the journey with his men. When he arrived there, he rushed to the king's court. Earlier, when he used to go there, attendants would come, help him dismount the horse and tend the animal. No such considerations were shown that day. Even then he hastened to the court and stood before the king, who, seeing him, turned his head away. He asked, "O king, why's it that you turn away your head?" The king said, "O son of a potter, you promised to be away from here only for two months. It's in the fourth month you have appeared." The potter said, "O vexed king, you didn't ask how I was."

"What shall I ask you? Tell me."

"Sir, the news is this. I have a daughter of marriageable age. I thought of marrying her before returning here."

"You stupid, why don't you marry her to me?"

"Long live our gracious king."

The king provided him camels with panniers and gave him other provisions and men, the drummers with drums, and said, "Friend, if I go there, King Rai Diach will challenge me to a battle. So get her married to my arrow and bring her here."

The potter returned to his country. He got his daughter married to the arrow given by Anerai. At midnight, with the help of the flambeaux, they set out on their journey. Rai Diach, who was standing on the skirting of his fort, noticed the flambeaux. He sent his men to find out what was meant by the burning flambeaux at that hour of the night. After investigations, his men returned and reported, "Sir, King Anerai has married in potter Raton's family. That's why these flamebeaux are there."

"Bring him here", he ordered.

Ratno was brought before the king who asked him, "Why didn't you marry your daughter to me? Is she so beautiful that you gave her hand to Anerai?"

Ratno said, "Sir, I wondered whether this poor man's child will be acceptable to you. That's why I didn't approach you."

The king said, "Hell with you. Hell with Anerai. She is my wife." He ordered his men to fetch the woman.

Anerai's men fled in fear, and reaching their country, said to Anerai, "Sir, your wife was snatched away by Rai Diach," Anerai collected his armed forces and invaded Rai Diach's country. For twelve months the battle dragged on. Anerai's cannon balls however couldn't cross the walls of Rai Diach's fort, and fell down midway. In the end Anerai returned to his country defeated.

King Anerai filled a salver with gold coins and gave it to a crier and ordered him to go round the charan villages and publicly proclaim that the charan, who would bring the head of Rai Diach, should accept the salver, and, in addition, he would be given whatever he asked for when he returned with the head.

Bijal's wife accepted the salver and kept it inside. When Bijal returned and saw the salver, he said, "You stupid woman, why did you accept this?" Now he was in a fix. If he refused to go, the village of the charans would be ransacked and erased. There seemed to be no other way out, and he set out on his journey to Girnar.

Charan set out on his journey with the harp on his shoulder  
He tied to it tassels and jingling bells,  
God merciful, help Rao to delight in my music,

\* \* \* \* \*

He sang on the first night by the side of the fort,  
Says Guloo, an artist has arrived in Girnar,  
The seeker played strangely on his harp,  
The beggar seeks the head, said Bijal

Bijal was called inside the fort the next night. The king asked him to play on his harp and Bijal obliged. Bijal disclosed the purpose of his journey through singing on the third night. On the fourth and the fifth nights the king offered him jewels and other luxuries, but Bijal refused to accept them and insisted upon having his head. The negotiations between the king and Bijal went on for nine nights. Bijal would sing and in return demand his head and the king would offer him all wealth. On the tenth night Rai Diach said :

Like Dahesar,<sup>1</sup> if I had ten heads, I shall give all to you,  
 Only one head have I, ashamed to offer am I,  
 Elephants with all trimmings and horses I give you many.

Bijal said:

Never begs this beggar, these grains in the bowl,  
 I strike the string for the head, give it to me and happy be.

Fourteen nights passed this way, when Rai Diach said:

"You demand and how can I refuse? If say I "no",  
 With what face will you go back, O bard," says Rai Diach,  
 Unhappy all were when he agreed to give his head.

The subjects said:

An alien sinner came with his instrument of harp,  
 He speaks of nothing but head, demand it he will,  
 Without Rai's head, he will move not  
 Junagarh will break into pieces without Rai Diach.

Sorath bowed and beseeched the Mañanḥār<sup>2</sup>:

We both, the king and I, Bijal's slaves are,  
 Forget the demands of your strings, turn away, O Maṅta<sup>3</sup>

Rai Diach went to his mother and sought her advice "Mother, a Charan has come. He demands my head as alms. I offered him everything, but he refused to accept. Tell me, mother, what shall I do?"

"Return not the Maṅto," said the queen mother,  
 "With hope he has come, happy let him go,  
 He becomes happy who gives in the name of God."

Rai Diach asked Sorath, his spouse, to bring a dagger. He cut off his head to be given as alms to Bijal.

Bijal brought the head of Rai Diach to Anerai. The king pondered over the act of Bijal for a moment, and then said angrily, "Get out of my country right now. While killing the generous king didn't the fear of God prick you even for a moment? When the time comes, you will kill me, too."

Bijal then, banished from his country, migrated to Rai Diach's country. There he saw that Queen Sorath and the queen mother were ready to mount the burning pyre of Rai Diach. He also jumped into the raging fire and his wife followed him. She was pregnant and very close to the time of delivery. Because of the heat of the fire, there was an explosion, and the child went

1. Having ten heads.

2. A beggar who sings and begs.

3. A beggar who sings and begs.

up in the air and landed among the mob. People picked him up and brought him up. As he had come out of the *Manar*<sup>1</sup>, he was named Manriyo. His progeny are called *Manrias*<sup>2</sup> and so are called their villages.

*Qiso Sorath Ain Rai Diach Jo*, 11th-14th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

## The Saga of Sasui and Punhun

ANONYMOUS

The folk-story of Sasui-Punhun<sup>1</sup> (12th-13th century) in verse form existed solely in the memory of the minstrels, or in separate scripts obtaining at different times. The story is said to have been composed some time between the 12th century and the 13th century during the Sumra<sup>2</sup> rule. It contains 102 sections in all.

I justly praise the One  
Who created this vast wondrous universe  
He created the sun, the moon and the earth and the sky,  
The secrets of whom to no mortals are known.  
And He who knows He gave everything and the Quran He gave,  
Many beat the drums and the flags of pride wave. (1)

Many beat the drums of pomp and glory prate,  
All this happened when Dalu Rai in Sindh reigned,  
In the house of Naun, the Brahmin, a daughter was born.  
Seeing her horoscope said the skilled astrologer,  
Her fate was linked with a Muslim,  
For so it has been willed.  
She will love her man and be separated. (2)

Naun wept and tears rolled over his cheeks,  
Who can efface the law of destiny?  
Who can diminish aught in fate but fate?  
How can a daughter separate from her parents before marriage?  
A boat-shaped coffer was soon made,  
In it they placed their daughter dressed in gayest display,  
And put in it dowry rich enough to suit a royal maiden,  
They sewed her in waxen cloth with careful seams,  
Weeping bitterly they affianced her to the stream. (3)

1. A race in Sindh

2. Sumras ruled from 1026 to 1352.



They watched the coffer in the stream floating,  
 A day of lamentation and the night void of resting.  
 One thought alone consoled them a lot.  
 That the innocent child was in the guardianship of God. (4)

At Bhambhor<sup>1</sup>, floating placidly, this bark of little size,  
 Muhammad, the washerman surely sighted.  
 Whence comes my fortune here, he reflected. (5)

Muhammad called his wife, exclaiming wildly,  
 "No longer, Zainub, need you pine for a child,  
 here is one for us whose dowry proclaims a noble birth.  
 They named her Sasui, a name befitting the famed earth.  
 Lift her and kiss her as a proud mother." (6)  
 In her lap she kissed her well and long,  
 And took her on the hip and entered their house,  
 They looked around in the compound  
 The soap, the soda now wore the semblance of gold.  
 He longer moved the washerman as a man of humble birth  
 His little daughter's advent gave new colour to the scene. (7)

The washerwoman suckled the child,  
 And found its nourishment herself.  
 It was not the divine will that thus  
 The child's mother should be blessed. (8)

The Giver gives food to every creature,  
 Down to the ocean's depths all receive it though infinitely small,  
 Everyone thus receives livelihood from God. (9)

When she grew up, a beauteous maiden, she said to Muhammad,  
 "Make me a garden, father, with flowers arrayed,  
 Roses everywhere I would like to behold,  
 The plantain, lime and mango in abundance,  
 The mulberry, apple and grapes amid grass of every kind.  
 A paradise I would have, make it mine,  
 And in it place a summer-house of architecture fine.  
 Get me a spinning-wheel made of ivory with gems studded in it,  
 With handle wrought in gold inlaid with pearls.  
 I would grace the Atan<sup>2</sup> while sitting within the friendly ring.  
 Father; my garden's praise let the world sing." (10)

1. A small town in Sindh.

2. Sitting yard for women attached to the house.

Then, Muhammad laid a garden with flowers of myriad hues,  
 Its Persian wheels of sandal-wood were beautiful of view.  
 It had golden gates and a floor beautiful,  
 It was a house like heaven unfolding no common mason's art.  
 To finish it Muhammad took one year and months seven,  
 Attracted was everyone seeing this beautiful heaven,  
 All this for a girl who was got rid of by her parents,  
 Wondrous are the ways of Providence, she was saved and preserved.  
 She lived, destined to suffer an unrequited love.  
 Being proud of her adoption, Muhammad  
 tendered offering of thanks. (11)

What is ordained by fate has to happen.  
 Famine ravaged the land of Kech Makran.  
 No food for man or cattle, dried up was every tree,  
 No grain procurable for gold, misery and panic prevailed,  
 For the starving people succour from Sindh alone could be hailed. (12)

Our caravan can bring grain from Sindh, they said.  
 But who would provide escort to the caravan?  
 Entreat Jam Ari<sup>1</sup> to give Punhun, his son, escort,  
 Who will be to us a never-failing guide.  
 Submissively they sought Jam Ari to decide their fate. (13)

Understanding their intent, Jam Ari said there,  
 O Raj Mahajan<sup>2</sup>, what's it that brings you here?  
 Punhun I shall not let go, he is not of their age,  
 Think of someone else to be your guide. (14)

Then, Jam Ari's Diwan, a Hindu, who was there,  
 A wise adviser, withal, a young and handsome man,  
 Was selected and approved to lead the caravan.  
 "Bring grain in bulk some hundred khirars<sup>3</sup> and three score.  
 Take these young men and bring grain, delay not,  
 If it is not available cheap in Sindh, bring it from Jaisalmer<sup>4</sup>."  
 He left the place and reached the city of Bhambhor. (15)

Seeing the Hindu's handsome figure, extolled it everyone,  
 A place in every Otaka<sup>5</sup> he found, greetings everywhere,  
 Each to his capacity offered a hospitable fare.

- 1 Ruler of Kench Makran.
2. Conglomeration of Hindus and Muslims
3. A unit of measurement for grain.
4. A town in Rajasthan.
- 5 Sitting room.

Hearing of the beauty of the young man, Sasui arrived at the scene and asked;

"Are you the chief, or you have a master?"

"Jam Punhun my chief is," was Babiho's reply.

"A notable chief of Kech Makran, he rules in majesty,  
He is beautiful like a moon, he is so handsome a man,  
If you see him here as he is, you will believe what I say;  
And swooning you will all go.":

(17)

Sasui rejoined, "Enough of that, you Vanyan<sup>1</sup>, bring him here,  
Till you do it, we shall never believe what you say is true.  
It's our demand, your goods we'll place under ban,  
Till you bring your Punhun here through.

(18)

Finding no alternative, Babiho sent a messenger to Makran,  
To relate to Jam Ari the whole story of happening here,  
And expressed the hope his son the Jam he will spare.  
"It's then we, your subjects, will obtain release,  
And your caravan comes back supplied  
with means of life and peace."

(19)

Said Ari to Babehal calculating intelligently:

"Sasui is Sinh's fairest daughter,  
Should trouble to my son arise from her, the Hindu born,  
Should any one harm Punhu, beware of my wrath and bitter scorn.  
Your ears will be cut off, your body will be battered,  
I shall accuse you and have you hammered.

(20)

Like her no Sasui lives in Sindh, nor is she so beautiful,  
Invented tales these, rest assured, they aren't truthful,  
Get grain or men will starve, food they should have to the full.  
Your son will to his home safely return.

(21)

Then Ari allowed Jam Punhun to go.

"To Allah I entrust you, my son, in whom alone is trust.  
Arrange to come back quickly, my brave son,  
Allah is your protector; shelter and save you He will."

(22)

Punhun called the Raj<sup>1</sup> and addressed them thus:

"The one who calls me leader, should listen to what I say,  
For Sindh procure musk and in plenty take,

1. Hindus in Sindh are called Vanyan (Baniyan) by Muslims.

3. Muslim subjects.

Put it in bags, strong woollen covers make  
 We need a thousand silken bags, each swinging,  
 A thousand silken bags with bells, each tinkling as we go,  
 Bring the best dushalas you have, pleasing to the eye,  
 With which not even the silken cloth of distant climes can vie.  
 And bring red lungis and graceful fringe fold,  
 The camels you ride should have nose-piece of gold,  
 Their halters should look like strings of pearls,  
 Attach five bells loosely to make a merry sound.  
 When equipped thus, I shall ride as your chosen chief,  
 Come, join the hostages who wait our relief." (23)

To take leave he called his wives in distress,  
 A weeping mother who loved her son no less.  
 Each wife gave him ten mohurs as a token to the youth,  
 Those who gave the parting gift vowed constancy and truth.  
 He took two persons, Markh and Babur, as his men,  
 Jam Punhal drove his camel fast to reach his men. (24)

On their way to the destination two partridges warbled,  
 This omen explained a lover's meeting,  
 And also the loyal mission done. (25)

The journey continued and at Kahir Bela<sup>1</sup>  
 they stopped for the night,  
 They rested till dawn when all people to look arrived,  
 The praise of Punhun's Kafila<sup>2</sup> on every lip was rife  
 No villager had seen before such a sight in life,  
 Only about Jam Punhun everyone talked alike. (26)

A wise and wary woman, yet, at once  
 with love inflamed,  
 Of Punju's face and form, Sehjan in eagerness exclaimed,  
 "The noble chief of Kech has honoured us at last,  
 We'll find him grain and all he needs if here his lot be cast. (27)

Saying that a message to Jam she sent:  
 "If grain is all that you need I have enough to spare.  
 I shall load every camel with grain; none shall I spare,

1 Kahir forest  
 2. Caravan.

I shall give flour to your men and grain to camels.  
 Stay here a few days as you had a tiring journey on road,  
 Serve you I shall and look after your needs.  
 Let your camels and men a while have rest,  
 I have shown you what is for you best.  
 Now take a decision, to stay or proceed, I leave to you the rest." (28)

Thus to Punhun Babiho said:  
 "Sehjan is a wicked woman, wanton and without demur,  
 A bunyan's cot or a weaver's loom, no fear of caste for her,  
 She shuns not the camelman or a vagrant of the Thur<sup>1</sup>. (29)

Sehjan said thus:  
 "The clouds have gathered and see this falling rain,  
 Tomorrow should you seek your men and camels  
     may the search be in vain." (30)

Said Babiho again:  
 "Whom luck favours meet no doom,  
 They have sugar to their milk though  
     they spend their days in Rome." (31)

Sehjan says:  
 "His camel's foot-rope is the trophy I caress,  
 To douse love's flame, the relic to my burning body I press,  
 Come there my beloved, where I shall be waiting for you alone. (32)

Sehjan said to Babiho, an unkind adviser;  
 "You are standing like Lani desert burnt,  
 Did my beloved pass through here emitting the fragrance of musk?" (33)

Babiho said in reply:  
 "Like Lani desert I am not burnt,  
     you are wearing there fire,  
 The Baluch has fled; for me reserve your ire. (34)

Jam didn't stay, from Bela they started;  
 On moved the string of camels to Bhambhor as they departed.  
 In a few days they reached the outskirts of the town,  
 They pitched their tents outside the fort amid the shady trees,  
 The camels lost their loads and dropped down on their knees,

1. The desert in Tharparker district of Sindh is called Thur.

Sehjan's story:

Sehjan who had invited Punhun and wanted to play host to him,  
had fallen in love with him. When she remembered him she got up and  
found Punhun missing along with his men and camels. She traced the foot-  
marks of the camels and started running along the track. Her clothes were  
entangled with the thorns of the bushes and were shredded to pieces. Only  
the cord remained tied around her waist. (35)

She went after Punhun taking the track of the camels.  
The hour of Punhun's departure none let her know.  
Her tattered garb and the cord around the waist, her  
heart's condition did show. (36)

In the evening the Jam roused his men and chose a few  
They entered the streets of Bhambhor to view.  
They came to Sasui's garden, well pleased to no more roam,  
They hailed Muhammad's welcome to his hospitable home.  
The place emitted the fragrance of musk,  
The wondering men of Bhambhor flocked there kicking the dust;  
Seeing the Kafila of Kech a heart no one had to speak. (37)

The maidens at the Atan spoke; "Your chief we fain would see."  
Their answer was: "The man who wears Ari's robe is he."  
And they asked; "Who amidst you reigns?"  
They said: "The maid in crimson dressed, her feet having henna stains:  
Sasui is her name, her ancestry none explains." (38)

Kafilas have come from Kech, bringing musk with them,  
For every shop a bag of musk they bring,  
God give them grain so that they live in their country. (39)

Sasui, a svelte belle amongst her friends,  
Her face was like a moon, her body as if made of gold.  
By her the straying fairies passed, unrecognised and lost,  
Her walk observed, even the elephants retired in shame.  
Her eyes were a constant light which removed the darkness around. (40)

Muhammad's lovely daughter, she changed darkness to light.  
Calling companions she adorned herself for the sight.  
She went to see the caravan hearing their praise,  
Jam Punhun stood there, on him was fixed her gaze.  
Their eyes met, what wine could thus inspire,

It was war, attack commenced, a sharp exchange of fire.  
 The spears of love made havoc, for brandished well were they,  
 Love pushed away the prudence and won the day.  
 The hermits became reckless and threw the counsel to winds,  
 The guardian cords of wisdom snapped, nought else their passion blinds,  
 Patience fled, for sense had lost reflection's aid.  
 The victory of Sasui came in many pains arrayed,  
 Some she took with her, some she left with her lover.  
 She returned home sobbing and shedding tears for ever.  
 Kalhora says, our destined path we can forsake never. (41)

To Punhun rest was miserable, full of care,  
 Coming out of the garden he reflected what befell him there.  
 The echo of the fairy's voice was no more heard,  
 The clouds moved and rained over his head, his own cloud disappeared.  
 The lightning forked and lit the landscape around,  
 Tears streamed from his eyes as he walked,  
 A hunter seeks the path he marked the chamois go,  
 So followed he the spots of blood his arrow caused to flow.  
 He then sought the path bearing the blow,  
 He found out after all the track leading to his beloved. (42)

He found the place of his beloved, he strove to win,  
 With skilful arm he drew his bow and lodged the barb within.  
 Zainub rose and angrily the bold intruder met,  
 Sasui ran to welcome one she never could forget,  
 Going near her lover she confronted her mother,  
 Scolding a guest whose presence should make us glad. . . (43)

To Muhammad, then, drew near Punhal, the Jam,  
 Near him he went to give his salam.  
 With all courtesy he invited him for talks.  
 "My lot is yours, I shall live by washing too.  
 I live in Kech Makran, Punhun is my name,  
 We come from there where reigns Ari Jam.  
 He gave me presents oft and held my house in respect,  
 But, covetous, I left Makran too eager to reflect.  
 Here I shall look after your work entire."  
 The Washerman promised and gave his shelter. (44)

Observing Punhun's gait, marvelled the elite and laity,  
 Some wise man swore that washerman he was not his  
 mein dignity spoke.

He must be prince in disguise, perhaps crossed in love,  
Plan to test his skill, his profession would be well to prove. (45)

A few pairs of cloths they brought him all complete,  
Muhammad asked him wash them clean and neat.  
"As ancestor's profession to you it will be easy  
to rub, scrub and beat,  
Early or late this evening are needed these clothes,  
Work on the washing and bring them clean." (46)

He changed his clothes and kept them away.  
He sat on the earthen vessel wearing a sash,  
Before him Sasui placed the clothes and whispered  
a few words of understanding.  
She kept away and observed him working.  
She longed to see him pass his trial and succeed.  
He rubbed the clothes and took them to the landing to wash. (47)

At the landing he struck the clothes against the plank,  
With the strokes he tore them all to shreds,  
And the pieces went rolling in water away.  
It was destiny that showed him this day,  
This type of work he had never done before,  
In Bhambhor such a washerman had never been known before.  
Sasui brought his lowly meal,  
Seeing his plight bitterly she wept  
With sympathetic fire she felt her maiden's heart inflamed,  
You offered to wash clothes, but fear my father,  
Trust only Him in whom our hope is secure,  
These troubles once over, we hold the heaven sure. (48)

He folded the torn clothes on the landing.  
The wise Punhun put golden mohar in each pair,  
Packing the washing he brought them to the path. (49)

The tatters, packed, he set them aside,  
Men arrived, packed, he set them aside,  
Men arrived and he opened the packings,  
Correct were all bundles, none detected aught of blame,  
Unfolding the torn clothes they found a mohar placed,  
Seeing the Gold coin not a word anyone said. (50)



The trial over, doubts dispelled, new courage Punhun gained,  
 Thenceforth no one presumed to doubt he was a washer trained.  
 Consulting Markh and Babiho, he bade them keep his plan,  
 A secret never to be disclosed to any other man,  
 "In the name of God, not a word to any one,  
 Let me pass my days with all happiness."  
 Said Sasui to Jam to ask for her hand,  
 "Demand me and I shall be yours for life." (51)

Punhun demanded Sasui's hand of Muhammad  
 To Sasui Muhammad went and of the talk she was apprised.  
 Said she, "If parentes both consent how can I refuse?" (52)  
 Nine hundred coconuts entire, and a thousand kernels  
     split in halves,  
 As a gift to Punhun they sent,  
 That Punhun weds Sasui is what they said.  
 Loudly beat the drums and instruments of sorts,  
 From the branches firmly planted swung silk tassels,  
 With the tumult of trumpets and offerings for the bridegroom,  
 Sitting in the palanquin he hastened to her direction,  
 She whom he could claim today as his bride.  
 The guests met, hugged each other in happiness  
 The slave girls tripped the marshalled flocks and herds.  
 The gifts were brought and viewed with pleasure,  
 As dowry they gave silken clothes, besides treasure. (53)

The wedding over and a few days passed.  
 A messenger came from Kech to find out his doings here.  
 Jam Ari wrote in anger, "Son, for shame  
 You have washed clothes, and tainted our good name.  
 Who nourished you in infancy, who watched after your growth,  
 You forgot your parents treating them as dead,  
 Your brothers and sisters you appear to hate,  
 Your wives and kinsmen too, deserted of late,  
 All for Bhambhor, there to rise to a washerman's estate." (54)

The missive read, tears flowed from Punhun's eyes.  
 "My fate" said he, "has already been written by God,  
 Who can erase what has been written by destiny"  
 In bowing to its dictates, no blame can rest on me,  
 To return to Makran will not be possible for my whole life.  
 O Markh, and you Diwan, go and tell father of all this."

Away the camels moved in a stately file,  
 They travelled on till Kech appeared and reached home in a while.  
 They related the whole story to Ari Jam,  
 Punhun refused to return who was foremost in his mind.  
 The news imparted struck to earth the wretched father fell,  
 Mother wandered about like a mad woman, who can tell.  
 Their hair unkempt, the wives wept bitterly,  
 "Return, you lord of Kech, to us disconsolate."  
 Punhun's brothers, noble youths of graceful form and mien,  
 Bitter and uncontrollable were the tears they shed.  
 Hoto, Noto, Chunro also beat their heads,  
 Let Bhambhor burn in flame which had separated Punhun from them,  
 Kechis wept bitterly and fell on the ground. (55)

Then, choked with tears, Ari Jam said to Markh,  
 "You were the brother of a noble house, the others were slaves,  
 Than you I felt Punhun lacked no better hand,  
 Betrayed your trust, a trator's blood I justly might demand  
 You are all traitors, you left Punhun back in the wilderness." (56)

Commending all to God, equipped, both night and day, to ride,  
 Hoto, Noto, Chunro departed with Babur as a guide,  
 They rode the camels in reckless haste,  
 They travelled day and night without any rest,  
 Miles they travelled and entered the streets of Bhambhor. (57)

As they entered Bhambor, the news to Punhun was conveyed,  
 With dignity he met all and embraced.  
 Imbued with the emotion of love they all wept.  
 Confused, the brothers could not speak, yet  
     bitter tears they shed,  
 Then came Sasui and touched in reverence the feet  
     of Punhun's brothers (58)

Seeing their sister-in-law, the brothers discoursed a while;  
 "Our brother is ensnared by this crocodile.  
 To come with us he will never consent,  
 We will take him away tonight by a stratagem,  
 With stern resolve and deceit we take him away before dawn breaks." (59)  
 Un aware of fate that awaited her at dawn,  
 She returned home seeing her brothers-in-law.  
 She made them minced meat and rice rich and good.  
 With sweet dish proved a choice delicious food,

Profuse pulau<sup>1</sup> of tasty ingredients with other dishes  
 First time it was she entertained  
 Punhun's brothers, her guests, (60)

The sons of Ari Jam were mischievous when  
 once they found their foe,  
 They cooked the morrow's food that night, a morrow  
 dark with hope.  
 O sister-in-law, unveiled you were to men  
 who treated you so. (61)

Mixed with drug they filled cup after cup for  
 Punhun to drink.  
 That brothers could be traitors, Punhun didn't think.  
 Senseless he grew, he slept and saw no more.  
 Babur brought a saddled camel and set it by the door.  
 They lifted Punhun and placed him on the camel's saddle.  
 Once he fell from the camel's back quite unaware,  
 They raised him, and Hoto lifted him and put him on the camel.  
 His legs and arms they tied and again made him ride,  
 They fled away rendering his body in numbness,  
 Virtuous Jam left his home of love tied to the camel's back. (62)

Home they brought the virtuous Jam tied.  
 He would meet or speak with none, the handsome youth,  
 He tore off his clothes as if run amuck,  
 No drop of water touched his lips, nor would he eat food.  
 Old Ari's grief none could tell, his action he regretted  
 They tied the warrior and put him in the dungeon. (63)

There at mid-night, Sasui awaking all alone,  
 Finding Punhun missing in the bed, she screamed to the bone,  
 She tore her hair and yet called him again,  
 "Answer me, my husband, my life-partner,  
 I shall die without you, my beloved, without question.  
 At the time of the agony of death, come my beloved and console me,  
 I have none to save me from the grave, but you.  
 Nor have I parents who could feel my agony,  
 Except you there is none, who to my rescue, would come.  
 She struck her head with the brick resolving to kill herself, be done."  
 Disturbed, around her the folks of Bhambhor stood, missing none. (64)

1. Rice preparation.

In the morning, she looked around, Punhu wasn't there.  
 She didn't find the camels of his brothers; the guesthouse was bare,  
 She stooped to locate Punhu's fresh footprints, if any were there.  
 Then tears of blood she wept,  
 Lamenting, she spread around the Gulal<sup>1</sup> of woe,  
 How shall she lie, the injured one, whose beloved  
 camelmen kidnapped. (66)

Thus addressed Sasui her friends, "You slept, why did you potion take?"  
 "They took away Punhun, for you never remained awake." (67)  
 Susui answered, "My husband's brothers came,  
 I loved them for his sake,  
 Conspiracy they hatched, these men together;  
 I couldn't read their heart's desire, nor guessed  
 what it meant,  
 Their heart's desire they gained, succeeded and went. (68)

"They saddled their camels and my heart sank, I became weak,  
 They fixed the bands and leashes, their tobras<sup>2</sup> did they seek;  
 In Baluchi they spoke to Punhun, I know not what they said." (69)

"Amid them were two, both handsome, youths,  
 Camels with red saddle-clothes and silken collars around their necks,  
 I took them as loving guests, but they came to take my Punhun away. (70)

"I saw them during the day and welcomed them with warmth,  
 These hands prepared delicious meals for them with some solace,  
 Crooked camelmen they were, I never verified the antecedents,  
 O sister, they took away my husband while I slept, (71)

"Pray for me, follow my husband I shall,  
 The passes I shall explore through which my husband passed,  
 As time passes with my strength I shall overtake these Kechis  
 My Peer<sup>3</sup> will favour me, I shall find my beloved in the passess." (72)

"O Sasui, go not into the wilderness, gird up your loins,  
 Do whatever to seek what you want amid these hills,  
 Lest separation from the lost one adversely affect your mind." (73)

1. Red powder thrown on one another on the occasion of the Holi festival.  
 2. A bag out of which horses eat grass, etc.  
 3. A Muslim saint

"Don't go into the wilderness; here the reptiles abound;  
On every wayside jackals, wolves, baboons and bears are found,  
From the streams black vipers hiss and creep about,  
Above in the hills the wasps your onward path will oppose.  
Reptiles for a kill from the trees hang.  
These dangers past, per chance you reach Punhun's place." (74)

"Stop me not, sisters; make way: I go in the morning;  
My feet will take his footprints, and take me to Kech,  
Don't you curb my love, think of the pain of my longing." (75)

"None shall go with me, or follow me, my friends.  
Seen I not Punhun's palaces, destroy them I shall,  
May it not be that he lifts his hand of love from my head!" (76)

"O mountains, I fear not you, though hard you be,  
If your paths are of stone, my limbs of iron are made,  
Were Punhun with me, Sasui wouldn't care a bit for you." (77)

"O you wretched mountain, you know not my pain and woes,  
Pebbles burn my feet, and the wind screams,  
O beloved, come now, it's so hard to trek this mountain path." (78)

"O Sasui, why wring your hand, and shout?  
Why shun the green trees and look for the thorns?  
Why ask for the camelmen, you husband left himself?" (79)

"May not the grief of separation afflict my mind,  
My smarting wounds need some balm of consolation,  
No longer can I walk on these rugged tracks  
to scale the mountain." (80)

"I don't have a hoe or spade to cleave the rocks,  
By separation troubled sore, the distance I  
have to traverse on foot,  
They took away my beloved by betrayal, the  
camelmen played a dirty trick,  
I seek my lover by right and mock unjust pursuit." (81)

"Punhun would never go on his own, camelmen  
kidnapped him forcibly,  
He wandered, shedding tears of blood, a restless rill,  
Those who bore him off, I seek their camels." (82)

"When Punhun comes, all places will come alive,  
All the doubts, all complaints will come to an end,  
He will come and greet and bless everyone." (83)

"He didn't injure me, I was lured to sleep,  
Happily I built relations, I was blind, why didn't I die?  
Why didn't you kill me, so that he could  
have a more beautiful bride?" (84)

"O mountain, you didn't answer this unhappy woman;  
See, I shed tears mixed with blood,  
She to whom love is sole companion  
will walk the stony paths." (85)

"The starry nights will always be there,  
I shall know this world only when the dawn breaks,  
I shall keep crying, seeing Punhun's footprints." (86)

Sasui's friends accompanied her, sharing her pain.  
Sasui asked them all to go back and seek their homes,  
"Hard to bear is separation, it may harbinge your death;  
You may die of thirst and curse, my Punhun." (87)

Toiling on to the trees she vowed;  
"Having Punhun with me shall I return this road,  
Every tree I shall congratulate, remembering my company." (88)

To every tree she expressed her grief, her pain,  
The wind rent her garments and pining marred her beauty;  
Come back, Jam Punhun, these passes are killing me." (89)

Crying and crying she climbed and walked,  
Those travellers from Kech she asked after Punhun,  
To those who overtook her she narrated her miserable woes,  
Beseeched them to tell Punhun that, in spite of his absence, he  
must not his love forget." (90)

"My beloved, It's not fair to sport with women's lives,  
It's unbecoming of your honour, try to understand,  
Beloved, I shall break myself limb by limb,  
without you on this mountain." (91)

"Tawny are the camels of Kechis as their heads black,  
 Camelmen unleashed them to trace in the jungles here,  
 They grazed on sandal trees and broke the henna trees,  
 Those who you are seeking passed through this way early morning." (92)

"The rock as my bed, tree trunk as my pillow I take,  
 Where the night falls, the animals will be my friends,  
 These are the mean plans of Punhun's parents,  
     my mind admits no meaner care." (93)

"Camels are foes and camelmen too, so are my brothers-in-law.  
 The fourth foe is the sun that set early to delay my task,  
 The fifth foe is the moon that didn't rise early  
 the sixth foe is the wind that covered with dust  
     Punhun's footprints.  
 The seventh foe is the rock that wounded my feet,  
 But who is this wretched woman to oppose the decree of fate! (94)

"Baluchis may be so many but my Ari is only one,  
 He quenches the thirst of the thirsty in the desert,  
 All alone am I; survive I shall if he returns." (95)

The separation of Baluch and the turmoil in the heart,  
 The thirst that made her weary and sick, she wept bitterly,  
 In front of her was a goatherd, a robber confronted her. (96)

Then Sasui invoked God, "Lord of the Universe, Beneficent one,  
 Save me from this monster, save this chaste woman from the scoundrel;  
 O God, give me a place inside the earth to hide myself."  
 Then the earth quaked and a crevice appeared there.  
 She sank with grace, God Almighty gave her a real place,  
 And there she remained in peace forever.  
 The chasm contracted and the land levelled,  
 The goatherd stood in awe, completely stunned.  
 He gathered himself then and raised there the barrow on the  
     place where Sasui disappeared,  
 She met her beloved in heaven after all. (97)

After four months Punhun was released from the cell,  
 About his future plans asked people in Kech.  
 "I shall not stay here, go I shall to that country,  
 To look after my beloved, my fairy." (98)

Punhun took with him Hoto, Lolo for company on the way.  
 He mounted the camel, the brave one feeling the strength of yore,  
 Mad with desire of love, he turned to Bhambhor,  
 Says Arif, he rushed towards his beloved's abode  
 On his way in the Bela pass, he marked the earthy borrow. (99)

"Stop the camel, Lola, visit I shall this mound," (100)  
 Punhun asked the goatherd standing what meant that barrow?  
 "A beateous woman," said he, "came this way in search of her husband.  
 She prayed, the earth burst in twain and in the fairy went,  
 Her name was Sasui, the sorrow-stricken woman."  
 Punhun fell from the camel hearing this news;  
 He lost his senses and was for a moment numb.  
 Then he wept and the tears flowed from his cheeks,  
 He wept for his beloved, he wept and wept,  
 So great was his woe the hills around convulsive response made.  
 Within its marshy bed the crocodile was disturbed,  
 His intense feeling gave way to moaning and the hills shivered,  
 Hearing his lamentations the animals joined his mourning,  
 The lover's painful condition even the birds owned,  
 Who else could know the distress of a suffering heart!  
 Performing ablutions he went near the grave and confronted God.  
 "Is there any place for me, my dove!" he entreated.  
 Sasui called, the earth opened place for him and in he went,  
 Great God thus united within the grave the two lovers,  
 Sasui and Punhun.  
 The Lord of the universe, He made this union possible. (101)

"Come, Punhun. Come! fear not a narrow place,  
 You have inside abundant fragrant gardens and fruits."  
 Like rain Nabi's brilliance fell round that made everyone happy.  
 A word reached Kech that Punhun met his beloved. (102)

*Qiso Sasui-a Ain Jam Punhun-a Jo*, 12th-14th century Tr. by Param Abichandani

## Poems

### QUZI QADAN

QAZI QADAN (Qāzī Qādan 1463-1551) was one of the earliest Sufi-poets of Sindh. Little is known about his birth place and his early life. It is said that his ancestors resided in Sehvan and Thatta, the two main centres of learning in that period. The poet, however, spent most of his life at Bakhar and in course of time became



the Qazi of the town. The main thrust of his poetry is sufism. He made experiments with the prevailing poetic form of *doha* by changing its rhyming scheme and number of lines, and produced a new form called *Bayt*. He wrote in the language prevalent in his times and wove into it his spirit and philosophy.

## 1

Endless are the Ayats and other utterances vocalised by i's and a's  
In absolute faith in Him,  
He takes care of all His creatures.

## 2

As you go on with your studies,  
even if you read hundreds of books,  
All that they say is, you won't meet the Beloved that way.

## 3

I haven't any religious books or grammars:  
It's a different place where I have met the Beloved.

## 4

People went on reading the Quran, millions of times,  
But they couldn't know the self within,

## 5

If they don't seek His vision even for a moment,  
How can they really claim His love and kindness?

## 6

Forget all other letters, remember only Alif, the first one;  
Light the flame that is never extinguished.

## 7

Ever since I heard clearly the call from within,  
I have aligned my heart with Him.

## 8

He is not to your south or north,  
not on this or that side;  
You wander about, all confused; see him in yourself.

9

With the river inside,  
     you ask the whereabouts of the ocean.  
 The pearls are within you;  
     why don't you dive and pick them up?

10

Though in the same pond,  
     no mutual relationship exist between them;  
 Frogs at the bottom  
     have no intimation of the blooming lotus above.

11

This falcon has become a royal falcon,  
     it doesn't kill birds any more;  
 Eyes set on the Divine Throne, it swings on the high minaret.

12

Loving are my relatives;  
     they live in the city of Loving-kindness;  
 Whatever they say to me is out of loving care.

13

First, know yourself;  
     to know the Beloved then is easy;  
 Also, keep to that very door,  
     from which you are not driven away.

14

First, lose yourself;  
     one who loses oneself will attain Him;  
 Turn your face within, He is in you.

15

As you have not made your body as slim  
     as the needle for applying collyrium,  
 How can the Beloved place you in His eyes?

## 16

On the day of the great reckoning,  
    even if seventy suns awfully burn;  
I will consider them all as clouds,  
    if the Beloved meets me.

## 17

O mother! now I have forgotten the timings  
    of the ritual prayer;  
Who'll still celebrate the Id?  
    I have met the Beloved!

## 18

A boil is burst in the stomach  
    but the Mulla cuts off the flesh;  
He has dived in the dust, a futile exercise;  
    may God answer my anguished cry!

## 19

O Qazi! don't sermonize that much;  
    you have shifted knowledge from head to heel,  
When the camel leaves on a journey, who will  
    load the heavy bag on him?

## 20

If you were as true to the Master as you are to the world,  
This boat would float on the plains, where there is no water.

## 21

Not eating anything in the water,  
    a bird chose to die by drowning;  
If you but know what that means, you won't be feeble.

## 22

The day declines, the evening descends;  
    soon the night will fall,  
Standing upright, the boatman calls,  
    the boat is close to the river-bank.

23

All the aches are hard to monitor,  
     but there is no ache like this one;  
 God alone knows how it plays inside like an instrument.

24

You slept the whole night,  
     covering the head like a dead body's ,  
 Neither do you think of any preparations,  
 Nor have you any anxiety of how you will meet Him.

25

Where even birds feel frightened and reptiles scared,  
     there if He is with me,  
 I'll cross the difficult mountain-passes.

26

Forgetting the Beloved, they shed tears of blood;  
     out of ignorance they do this;  
 Losing the principal sum in gold,  
     they end up with handfuls of dust.

27

If a friend at times appears to be a foe,  
     one should not feel bad;  
 Though a shawl be reduced to rags,  
     the wax in it doesn't lose its dye.

28

All of them have erred, erring came down from them!  
 Ever since Adam and Eve erred, the whole world has been erring.

29

You, stupid one! the place where you broke  
     the jewel negligently,  
 Why didn't you cry in repentance there,  
     retrieving its two pieces?

30

While you kept on drawing the fortune-telling line  
 the sowing season was over;  
 You ask those who idled away the time  
 as to how it feels to starve in the harvest season!

*Bayts*, 15th-16th century

Tr. by Motilal Jotwani

### Thirty Verses

SHAH ABDUL KARIM

SHAH ABDUL KARIM (Sāh Ābdul Karīm, 1536-1624), the second known poet of Sindhi after Qazi Qadan, was born in a notable Sayed family which traces its lineal links to Herat. His ancestors came to Sindh from Herat in 1398. His poetry contributed its bit towards the development of Sindhi poetic tradition which grew earlier in the later part of the fifteenth century. In his poetry Shah Abdul Karim exhorts human beings to work out their destiny through devotion and action.

Thirty of his *bayts* are given below:

1

Say Allah is one, learn no other speech,  
 Keep on writing in your mind this true word alone.

2

My heart is used to hammering like iron on the anvil;  
 With all the remembrance of the Beloved,  
 it has not melted away.

3

If you wish to meet the Beloved, follow my advice;  
 Like a man gone mad give up all relationships.

4

Give head to my advice and do not hold converse with one  
 Who speaks out the matter about the Beloved to another.

5

Take not the speech of animals,  
     insects and birds to be their speech,  
 By Allah, this tumult and sound  
     is of the Beloved Himself.

6

Make a bonfire of all your wisdom;  
     Only love will take you to Him.  
 Through what you think is a difficult sea,  
     but indeed is not wide enough.

7

Give your heart to the Beloved  
     and your body to the people;  
 Private cloisters and public mosques  
     go together for the general weal.

8

Do not disclose the story, for it will lose its flavour;  
 The first had better remain closed,  
 For if opened it's all empty air.

9

All are water-carriers, who take jars on their heads,  
 Some fill water for their Beloved and some do it for wages,

10

What if the husband forgot her? She has not forgotten him;  
 No one will ever say there has been  
     darkness in her house.

11

Sweet is the desolate lane where the Beloved is by himself,  
 Turn away from the place where  
     crowd hundreds of base men.

## 12

He who is upright on his part finds his way to the wholeness,  
And celebrates an Id everyday,  
for others, the Id comes when it will.

## 13

Love does not come by messages,  
mere wishes do not win over the Beloved,  
The eyes will have to shed tears of blood  
on dark and lonely nights.

## 14

First lose yourself, then only you find Him;  
The beloved is not separate from you,  
just turn your face within.

## 15

Camel of desire! Why did he not drink sweet, clean water?  
I vainly tried to induce him, but he  
impulsively falls on the poisonous creeper.

## 16

O woman! avoid sitting under the thatched roof,  
stand, burning in the sun;  
You chose those people as your own  
who are in the far-away sunny land.

## 17

Friend, away with your home,  
the caravan is speeding away from me;  
Your heart, unlike mine, knows no burning  
like the wick of a lamp.

## 18

The trick of theft lies on secrecy,  
the object in the thieves' view remains unknown;  
First they conceal themselves  
thereafter the things they steal.

19

We come from where there are no bright, orange clothes;  
Even when we go to a marriage,  
We are in rags, with *loi* on our head.

20

If by spending five *dams*<sup>1</sup>, friend benefits by one dam  
Even then you are the winner,  
considering the great good done.

21

He is here, He is there, He abides in my mind,  
In His own light He beholds Himself.

22

Thirsty young men do not care to take money tied in a knot,  
Proudly they go to the bar-tender  
and give their heads for a sip.

23

Those who churn themselves with questions  
are brave and wise;  
For a good trait in a man is like butter in the milk.

24

Do not go about rebuking, treat them also well who are uncivil to you;  
If you desire to meet the Beloved  
consider their faults as virtues.

25

The sandalwood when cut  
will paint the axe in its own lovely hue;  
A friend may turn his face a hundred times,  
he does not give up his friendly nature.  
The knower knows that anguish creates love.

1. A unit of currency.



26

Love and price, O friend, go ill together;  
There is complete agreement among the Sufis on this point.

27

The friend is tolerant,  
    you may mount your desire on desire;  
The guava wood though worn with age can bear much weight.

28

The foolish never grasp the reality,  
    they look for it here and there;  
How will the eyes in which dwells duality see the One?

29

O friend! all dreams are insubstantial,  
    no one should trust a dream;  
Asleep we were together; when I woke up.  
    He was no longer there.

30

Those with faith crossed the river,  
    those without it were afraid.  
The Mullah found it too swollen  
    You brave it with a smile.

*Bayts*, 16th-17th century

*Tr.* by Motilal Jotwani

## Ten Verses

PRAN NATH

PRAN NATH (Prāṇ Nāth, (1618-1694), the first exponent of *Sagun Bhakti* in Sindhi poetry, was born of a Sindhi mother and Kutchi father at Jamnagar. *Sindhi Vani*, a collection of his 524 *chaupais* forms a link in Sindhi literatures as far as *Sagun Bhakti* poetry is concerned. The language used by Pran Nath in his poetry is a mixture of the Kutchī, Dhatkī and Lari dialects of Sindhi. Ten of his *Chaupāīs* are given here:

1

In the games displayed you many shows spectacular,  
Through us you gave salvation to the destructible life in the *lokas* fourteen.

2

The greatness you gave me, now if only before me you appear,  
Speak sweet words and change worldly woes into heavenly weal.

3

When I see them yearning, I start waiting,  
When I advance to your door, draw me back from their waits.

4

When I say *Atma* is mine, there I blunder,  
My "I" can I say only when I am in my real abode.

5

O God, giving me an intellect, my heart you have made hard,  
Or it would have broken, remembering only one word "You".

6

O Swami, tell me, playing with me this game,  
How will you endow on me your great endearments?

7

O my husband, great hopes in me you repose,  
Why do You through me your guilt expose?

8

You accepted me as your bride, as my groom you are known,  
Did you declare to your soul, someone besides him does exist?

9

O God, being amidst us, see you everything,  
Why care you not for my heart, to meet the desire of your heart?

You play a play full of thousands of tricks and tactics  
 What shall I do, how shall I say, indestructible husband you are mine?

From *Sindhi Vani* 17th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

## Selections

### MIYON SHAH INAT

MIYON SHAH INAT (Miyōn Shāh Inātu, 1623-1712) was a distinguished Sindhi Sufi poet. A unique person in Sindhi literary history, he was a link in the unbroken chain of medieval Sindhi poets. His poetry was influenced by the native poetic tradition that influenced his successors. Like other Sufis, he was drawn to the *Sama's* (the gatherings of mystical music and dance). His poetry, written in the language of the common man, depicts his love and affection for the fellow-villagers and their day-to-day life. He has also narrated through his verses the life-story of Sindhi folklore heroines. His poetry is divided into twenty-two *Saruds* (modes of singing), out of which specimens of one *bayt* each from ten *Sarūds* are given below:

From *Sarud Jaman*:

When near the Beloved you are, why ask for a *Tabib*<sup>1</sup>  
 Show not you inner ailment, says Inat, to the ignorant.

From *Sarud Khambhat*:

Even with all the stars the moon combines fourteen full moons  
 In the complexion of Punam<sup>2</sup>, I see not the brilliance of my Beloved.

From *Sarud Srirag*:

When the ships sailed to the deeps, remembering the Omnipotent,  
 Looked not they to any direction, only fixed their eyes on God,  
 Remembered they only the support of the Umata<sup>3</sup>,  
 Then their ship embarked at Basra on the right landing.

From *Sarud Ramkali*:

Siyatpuri, Ramesri, who saw Karnataka,  
 Found they out, says Inat, what the evanescent was,  
 Among them who argue will come back those devotees.

1. Doctor.

2. Full moon night.

3. Believers.

From *Sarud Dhanasri* :

We are those who are in reality strangers,  
Indulging in vices, says Inat, we came and entered,  
My friend, turn all my vices into virtues.

From *Sarud Jatsri*:

Today, they built huts, erecting walls in the heart,  
Like breath, close to me is my Beloved,  
Why call those who already with you are?

From *Sarud Desi*

Fight not with the passes and pebbles, advance to the distant Kech<sup>1</sup>,  
Renounce the relationships here, says Inat, and teach this to others,  
Weal follows woes quickly, O Sasui.

From *Sarud Todi*

Enter from wherever you want, non-entering place  
turns to entering bank,  
Outwardly your body be with Dam, put your mind in Mehar,  
The one who yearned, treated the river as a rivulet.

From *Sarud Kamod*

The throne, the fortune, the lake, Tamachi, all bow before Nuri,  
She was from Gandhri race, but more beautiful than Samma women<sup>2</sup>,  
Repeatedly they cast furtive looks on her the whole night,  
All maids and king's retinue to her paid their respects,  
enchantment and lust, says Inat, from her eyes emitted,  
God gave her all these virtues in His mercy.

From *Sarud Karaero*:

Have no anxiety in heart, search a big lake,  
From there, says Inat, land on clean waters,  
Put not your beek in a boggy place, love water-lily,  
They come to no harm whom God protects.

From *Saruds*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

1. Place in south-west Sind mentioned in the folktale.
2. A dynasty that ruled over Sindh (1352-1524)

## Selections

### SHAH ABDUL LATIF

SHAH ABDUL LATIF (Śāh 'Abdul Latif, 1689-1752), a mystic poet, pronounced as an international poet by UNESCO, was a great grandson of Shah Abdul Karim, (1536-1623), a much revered mystic poet of Sindh. His *Risalo* is a rich treasure house of literary and linguistic curiosities. The style is a harmonious and happy blend of Sanskritized vocabulary and Persian and Arabic phraseology. The poems have been freed from the rigid rules of *mātrās* and prescribed rules of two lines. The rhyming scheme of the *doha* has been changed, transforming it into a new form of Sindhī Bayt.

The whole tone of his poetry, wrought in a variety of metres, is mystical. The topics it deals are (i) the mystery of divine love (ii) folklore of Sindh in its love stories and (iii) prominent features of common experience of the Sindhī rustic countryside. His poetry is known for its depth of thought and sincerity of emotion, especially his poems on the seven heroines of Sindh, which present a saga of poignancy and pathos. His entire poetry is divided into 30 *Saruds* (*surs*), each *sur* dealing with a different topic. A few selections from them are given below.

#### 1

#### Sur Kalyan

In the poems under Sur Kalyan, the poet describes the unity in diversity and solves the issue in the sufistic tradition. He talks of the true lovers who ultimately merge in God and enjoy the "oneness" after killing their ego.

#### 1

Brought forth my ailment the results, my Beloved felt the pain,  
Happiness the sorrows bring, and the crucifix a soft bed does gain.

#### 2

You blind physician, why do you my skin burn,  
Love is my disease, why serve me gruel for cure in turn,  
For whom the crucifix is a bed, their death is a sight, try to discern.

#### 3

The crucifix is calling, friends, is anyone ready to go?  
Those who talked of love, only they had to go.

4

The crucifix is calling, it calls the lovers hot  
If you have desire of love, retreat you not,  
Cut off your head first, then ask what love to be ought.

5

An adornment of the lovers is the crucifix,  
To go back is reproach, at the scene they arrived unmindful of risks,  
A promise to get killed is ever given by the lovers.

6

Tear yourself first with the scimitar, then ask what's love,  
Like an instrument, let body vibrate in pain of the Beloved.  
Grill your flesh if you want to repeat the name of your love.

7

The scimitar sharp need not be, let it be blunt,  
A while tarry he may, thus you see him a little more  
before bearing the brunt,  
Learn if you have to yearn, when the dagger is driven in  
don't grouch and grunt.

8

Don't give out the secret of the beloved's pain to others any instant,  
Vow and preserve the pain inside yourself, if you haven't learnt.

9

Stay, if you decide to chop off your head, or take the path to other lands,  
These are the realms for those who have a dagger in their hands.

10

If you have a desire to drink, go to the bartender,  
Says Latif, cut off your head and keep it beside the decanter,  
Drink cups and cups in bargain for your head, with banter.

## 11

Lovers are the drinkers of poison; at its sight they  
 flounce ;  
 They are the addicts of the bitter and the killing,  
 Says Latif, afflicted by love they are, annihilated by separation chilling,  
 Even though blood oozes from their wounds, the pain they never  
 confess.

## 12

Never do they preserve their heads, these lovers,  
 Says Latif, over them the madness of sacrificing heads and breath  
 ever hovers,  
 They pierce the head from the shoulders, and ask then,  
 what love is.

## II

## Sur Yaman Kalyan

Written in a pleasant style, the poems in Sur Yaman Kalyan absorb the images picked up from almost all the trades and professions of the rural folks. The poet advocates a pious life, and argues for imbibing patience and peace, poise and prayer in seclusion.

## 1

They fan the smudge and set aflame my body,  
 A new stake of love has pierced through my body,  
 His sight threw me into the raging fire.

## 2

Ask the moths how they feel burning over the flame;  
 They come along flying to set themselves aflame;  
 It's the spear of love that pierces through them.

## 3

If you think you are a moth, come, burn yourself and douse the flame,  
 The fire has burnt away, you merge yourself in the fire  
 without any excuse lame,  
 Comprehend the mystery of love and preserve the secret with no claim.

4

If you think you are a moth, return not seeing a flame,  
Enter the brilliance of the Beloved, and be great, no blame,  
Naive yet you are, heat of the furnace you don't acclaim.

5

Vowed the moths and over the flame they hovered,  
Being singed they flew off not, they themselves lowered,  
Many were the heads the helpless lost that lay scattered.

6

Turn your head into an anvil and locate the Backsmith,  
He will hammer you hard, and turn you into fine steel forthwith.

7

The Beloved ignites the fire and douses it, and lights it again,  
The sparks of the Blacksmith keep killing me in bargain.

8

They look only at those who have renounced the world,  
Not equal to the Beloved's spittle they think their heads are.

9

Come the northerlies, opens the jars the bar tender,  
The sturdy, who are fond of wine, come prepared with heads to barter.

10

The sturdy die, but O bartender, you don't, how obvious,  
How miserably you live without the Great Generous.

11

Trade your head somehow with the bartenders in barter,  
Saw away your head or stab it with a dagger,  
Don't turn away your head, die, much more a cup demands, in order.



## 12

The cup contains different tastes, the decanters have different brands,  
The drinkers appreciate the value of intoxication in the  
wine brought by the bartender.

## 13

In the arena of love think of your head never,  
Cut off your head, says Latif, and place it at the feet of the Friend, ever,  
Love is like an immeasurable serpent, only the bitten know better.

## 14

In the arena of love never mindful of your head be,  
Impale yourself on the Beloved's gallows and be delighted,  
Love is like a serpent, only the bitten know when slided.

## 15

Love is not a game that every youth plays,  
One who breaks the unity of existence, body and mind, this game plays,  
Throws his head on the sharp point of spear, and cut in two it lays.

## III

## Sur Khambhat

Khambhat in Sindhi is a distorted form of Khamach, a well-known mode in Indian music. In these poems the poet portrays man's tender feelings and emotions. He also describes the different whims and patterns of behaviour of animals and birds.

## 1

The moon rose on the fourteenth, but anxiously saw it everyone  
rising on the twenty-ninth.  
Blame them not, ask me if you need to know this secret.

## 2

Rise innumerable suns and eighty-four moons,  
By God, for me darkness everywhere pervades.

3

O moon, equal you will not be to my Beloved,  
You shine at night, shines ever my Beloved.

4

O moon, shall I tell you the truth if you don't mind,  
Sometimes, like a crescent you are, at others you are full,  
The fire glows in your face, you haven't the forehead of my Beloved.

5

That star, that place, there my Beloved is,  
The Friend is like sweet honey, bitter He never is.

IV

Sur Srirag

In the poems under *Sur Srirag*, the poet compares the world with the great ocean, to cross which without the help of the 'Great Boatman' is very difficult.

1

Lest the Beloved asks you, reminisce in your mind and mood,  
Carve out the vice, deal never in falsehood,  
O trader, trade in all things that denote only the truth.

2

The falsehood I earned, in pearls I didn't trade,  
Says Sayid, the things insignificant I ever bred,  
In this condition of mine, I live by Your mercy instead.

3

I dealt in falsehood, and broke all promises to God,  
This existence of mine full of sins is, my Lord,  
Know you the essence of everything, O incomprehensible One, my Lord!

4

Turmoil, rolling of waves, the deluge, limitless water again,  
 O Lord, let them not strike the boats against the isles in bargain,  
 No risk to the ship, no injury the boats may sustain,  
 Let this poor man's ship sustain not any loss, I maintain.

5

Everything in this world is sustained by You,  
 There's no dearth of mercy in You,  
 Spare me Your justice will not, your merciful hand have on me!

6

Those who kept awake the whole night and God remembered,  
 Says Latif, even their dust is of high value rendered,  
 Many come and bow before them in salute unhindered.

7

Those who worshipped God, the tide troubled them not,  
 With the help of repentance, braved the storms a lot,  
 Trust in God, they easily crossed the currents without a blot,  
 Perfect Boatman in the midst of the deeps helped them a lot.

8

Those who went to the deeps wearing the glass-mask,  
 Dived they fathoms deep and brought out oysters,  
 Only they will see the invaluable, the result of their task.

9

Deal in the things that if unsold remain not stale,  
 You will sell them in alien lands, nothing will go waste,  
 Work out a method that surely brings you salvation.

10

Good to the good every one does,  
 Unlike you who good to the evil does.

V

Sur Samundi

The very name of this Sur represents the subject of the poems included under it. The Sindhis, being traders, have been well-known seafarers from times ancient. As soon as the northerly winds started blowing after the monsoon, they would prepare to go on voyages to distant lands leaving their wives behind. The poems in *Sur Samundi* describe the pangs of separation of the wives left behind and depict their exalted wails, amatory and emotion-stirring. Retaining the orthodox mould of Sindhi bayt, the poet infuses into it the intense *vipralambh* sentiment.

1

O mother, leave not the stays of the seafarer's boat for gain,  
Lest they sail away plunging you in unbearable pain.

2

O mother, sit with the hawsers of the seafarer's boat in your hands,  
If your steps hesitate, they will forthwith sail for alien lands,  
The sea is their home; why with them didn't you sail?

3

I was tender and young when the beloved set on the journey,  
I wept, what could I do, stay back wouldn't my honey,  
Stalling me on the pier, away the trader sailed.

4

Missing are the boats in the harbour nor do the voices of traders ensue,  
Wounds of separation inflicted by the seafarers still ooze blood,  
Mark, O neighbours, how the pangs of separation are unbearable.

5

They sailed away, for ever leaving me abandoned,  
It's ages, none has from there returned,  
The anxiety for those gone away will erase you, O helpless one!

## 6

To cross the turbulent seas when they sailed,  
To endeavours overcoming the fast currents, though exhausted, they hold,  
None knows where they have themselves placed.

## 7

The shores they have sailed from, God bless, let them return there safe,  
Sire, give these seafarers the propitious winds.

## 8

Remembering the seafarers day and night I pine, nausea inside does churn,  
Absorbed in thought am I at the harbour, they have taken ages to return.

## 9

Impregnated with anxiety is the relationship with farers at the bay,  
Impaling me on the gallows, the traders left and sailed away.

## 10

Holding the mooring weeping, her hand on the prow,  
To hell with your trade, the one you learned to go.

## 11

Perhaps my love was fragile, he pushed the boat while I stood,  
Never had I thought before to sail with him would be good,  
I could have coiled myself with the rope to be in the boat.

## 12

One must not love those who wander about in boats every moment;  
When they sail away, women watch them standing in torment.

## 13

The reeds and trees blossomed, sprang too the anti-reeds,  
How did you, my love, forget the days of return, and my needs.

## 14

If only he came now, I would talk to him with heart opened out,  
O mother, in his embrace, I would tell him my woes aloud.

15

Away has gone my beloved, and so alone I struggle with winter cold,  
Mother, don't provoke the heart-aches my longing will be exposed.

16

Talk to me about my beloved and bring into me the life,  
Resuscitate my broken heart as you do the tower of the fort.

17

Today too, they talk of going away, these traders, without hassles,  
I watched them standing, leaving the shores in their vessels,  
Friends, the pangs of their separation will erase my existence.

18

They depart in winter and return in spring,  
To hell with their trade, I detest the trading, to themselves they string,  
Celebrations for those to whose homes husbands return and joy bring!

19

While I stood at the harbour, my beloved released the stays,  
Maybe, I have defects, but my beloved is so gracious.

20

Come Diwali, the seafarers ready their sails,  
Holding the oar in embrace weep their belles,  
O unfortunate ones, think of the pain the dawn hails.

*Tr. by Gobind Malhi*

VI

### Sur Suhini

*Suhini-Mehar* is a folk-story of Sindh. The poems of *Sur Suhini* describe the passionate longing of Suhini to seek her lover across the river, and her death in the rushing currents. Mehar or cowherd who had heard her screams when the earthen chatty dissolved in water, rushed into the river to rescue her but was drowned like the girl he loved. Mehar is fondly called Sahar or helper by Suhini.

## 1

Many come to the banks, having chatties with them, ahead,  
Everyone says, "I am Suhini, I love my beloved",  
In the morning will all be seen in the depths laid.

## 2

Standing on the banks many keep repeating, "Sahar, Sahar,"  
Some of them love their lives, others enter offering their lives,  
Sahar owns only those who enter with smiles.

## 3

Perched on trees are the crows, the evening passes good and fair,  
She took a chatty and entered listening to the evening call for prayer,  
She will locate the place where Sahar, the beloved, fares.

## 4

She took a chatty and entered, her arms went under,  
The helpless one lifted her voice and shrieked thither;  
"Return my beloved, being watched by wild animals I am hither."

## 5

The chatty broke and died lassie, the means to survive diminished,  
After that Suhini heard the calls of Mehar, almost finished.

## 6

Don't take "yourself" with you, forget the means against the torrents,  
O Suhini, love will take you to your beloved across the currents,  
Only those will cross the deeps who their love trust immense.

## 7

Those whose love is intense, a raft they have alone,  
Who long for Sahar, water turns for them into stone.

## 8

The one who is Sahar, is Suhini too, and so is the river,  
This is a secret, a tale of mystery, forget it never.

9

Where there are tumultuous whirlpools, and crocodiles  
with menace ever,  
She threw herself in water and offered herself to the river,  
Says Latif, she crossed over the waves with happiness ever.

10

Rising water spread panic, the sounds of terror ensued,  
In the tides the unburnt chatty dissolved and vanished,  
Sahar Jam alone will help me in the mid-stream she mused.

11

To enter the swollen river in haste is an act of the careless,  
Ten times a day the reproaches my *Damu* exhibited,  
Wisdom, intelligence and shame, all three were by love eliminated.

12

The icy water stopped her not, nor the shallows or the deeps,  
Everyday advises her *Damu* to desist from actions like these,  
Her body keeps burning till her Mehar she meets.

13

Bitter cold of winter, water turned into frost, sky  
overcast, screaming winds,  
Thoughts of Mehar invaded her mind when she raised her eyes' blinds,  
Bound by promise am I, swim I must the fast currents of all kinds.

14

O river, don't erase the banks for deeds you also have to account,  
There will never be the rainy season for ever for any discount,  
In the morning your onslaughts will be out of bound.

15

O whirlpool, don't roar, don't drown this lovelorn in your leaps,  
The colour I have been dyed with by Mehar can't be washed, it's so deep,  
I shall enter you today anyway, even if you reverse your affection.



## 16

From Mehar she drank a small sip of love,  
Lassie was inebriated by the taste of the sip offered by dove,  
The arrow of the love-god struck her, says Latif, sharp and deep.

## 17

Stirred in me at mid-night, friends, the comforts of Mehar,  
I crossed the stream and became worthy of Sahar,  
At dawn I saw the place of my beloved demure.

## 18

At mid-night slipped away my heart from my hands,  
Under the force of emotion, it swam the river to be merged in Sahar,  
At the break of dawn it saw the place of my beloved.

## 19

What are the whirlpools? Who am I? Who the ire of Damu will bear?  
It's the fate that I swim across the river,  
Sisters, at dawn with the command of Providence I bear.

## 20

If I die, it matters little, but let me be pushed to the other side,  
The Beloved will come to the bank and beat his breast beside,  
Even dead I am his, let me be by his side.

## 21

I grieve, torment myself, but die not, burn myself the whole night,  
Shun the duality, and talk of the beloved right,  
Heart-rending pain of the beloved's love shoots up at mid-night,  
Indigent and empty am I, I mount the gallows every night,

## 22

Dark night, the unburnt chatty, and it rains,  
The lions in front and the rear of desolation gains,  
Live long my love, enter the river I must, caring not for life hence.

23

The ocean drowned many, but this lassie drowned the ocean,  
The currents lost their vigour striking against the banks.

24

Drakes became her pal-bearers and the currents her coffin,  
Cranes of the isle to her corpse the shoulder gave,  
With her eyes the death angels she saw, but her mind  
was desirous of Mehar.

25

Standing on the bank, Mehar calls the boatmen,  
I shall dive and help, but you throw the nets,  
Let's search the depths, our beloved we may still get.

26

Holding the reeds on the bank, the lover stands cursing,  
How could you drown Suhini? Friend, my wife darling,  
O river, on the doomsday complain against you I shall.

27

In front of me standing he calls and says, "Come away."  
Swift is the current, tumult of waves, wild wind no way,  
Those, with whom is God, will drown not, think they.

28

Everywhere the talk of the Beloved is, omnipresent is He;  
The entire world is Mansoor, kill how many after all will you.

29

Let me swim a little, a little you make me swim,  
Let me try a little, a little you help me.

30

As long as she was alive, she never rested a while,  
She died on the waves, better with Mehar even if dead.

## VII

## Sur Ma'izuri

The literal meaning of the word 'Ma'izuri is a "simple woman". 'Sasui-Punhun' is a folk-tale of Sindh. The poems of 'Sasui-Punhun' deal only with the events that happened when Sasui realized that the camels that had arrived the previous evening from *Kech* (Kech Makrān), Punhun's place, had left and that Punhun, her spouse, had departed. The poet is at his best depicting the *vipralambh* sentiment of the *Shringar Rasa* in these poems. Shah Jo Risalo includes poems on Sasui-Punhun under the Surs Sasui Abri, Ma'izuri, Desi, Kohiari and Husaini. The specimens below are from the Surs Ma'izūrī and Dēśī.

## 1

Kill if you must, only You kill me, direct me not to the killers,  
Bear I shall not the hands of killers touching me.

## 2

Stab you must your lust with the dagger of "nothingness,"  
Dispose of everything that to desires related be,  
Think before you step out so that lightly walk you may.

## 3

Stretch yourself not, O mountain, be not taller, O hills,  
Shed not tears, O eyes, enabling me to trace the footprints of Punhun.

## 4

Thorns in thousands let prick my feet,  
Let the fingers be wounded and stones injure my feet,  
For advancing towards my Beloved no footwear do I need.

## 5

Die and live to enjoy the splendour of the Beloved,  
Follow if you this advice, you will be accepted by the Beloved.

## 6

Die and excel, die before your death,  
Live if you so desire, O lass, and then go back to Bhambhor,

Reconcile with Punhun to enjoy the Muluk-ul-Maut<sup>1</sup>.

7

Die and excel, what's life without the camelman,  
O defeated, have courage, give your breath to gain the Friend.

8

Those who died before their death, they never die and be finished,  
Alive they will always be who have possessed the life eternal.

9

Those who possess life eternal, they live for ever,  
They never die again who die before their death.

10

For those who desire to live, the mountain is too high to cross,  
O death, accompany me, and follow you I shall.

11

Even if you take long strides, or short be your steps,  
Nothing goes waste out of what has been written in fate.

12

The number of moments the fate has written,  
One has to live these moments, none more or less.

13

The miserable one accepted the hard task of search,  
Her entire body breaking under woes and miseries,  
It was in her fate already and now she traverses long distances.

14

Either help the ruined one to meet her Beloved, or kill her,  
Show to the miserable one with her eyes her husband once.

1. Angel of death.

## 15

See, the hills are being cursed by the woebegone,  
After the death of the belle, the deer weep in the desert,  
Roaming about they say, "The dead one killed us."

## 16

Set many suns, meet my Beloved I couldn't ,  
How I wish I saw my Punhun at the time of death.

## 17

I couldn't meet Punhun, you are already setting, O sun,  
I give you messages to deliver to my Beloved,  
Go to Kech and say, "The helpless one died on the way."

## 18

I didn't meet Punhun, the last moments have arrived,  
I long in these moments, weeping I ask for the way,  
May I not die before seeing the Beloved?

## 19

I didn't meet my Beloved, passed also this day,  
Finished me the sharp point of the spear of love,  
On the path the robbed one died calling "Beloved, Beloved".

## 20

I didn't meet the Beloved, the doomsday has arrived at last,  
Hands refuse to function, the sleep eyes have lost,  
Killed me the injustice that the Beloved did while going away!

## 21

Robbed am I, seize the reins, hacked am I, drive not the camel off,  
Come, visit, my husband, this humble one's hamlet,  
Without you, my Beloved, I have seen the doomsdays.

## 22

Camels, brothers-in-law, hills have brought me woes,  
I step forward and ask people the direction Punhun went,  
It's the word of the fate, or who will walk these distances.

23

When you saw the alien camels during the day in your yard,  
You should have, Sasui, kept watch on the path till the dawn did break,  
Why didn't you fasten the camels with your plaited hair,  
They couldn't have filched Punhun away like this, your love,

24

Camels used to grunt, but this time silent were they,  
Not a word the camelmen uttered saddling up the beasts,  
A secret bargain was made by them with your man.

25

What if the husband's kin were wicked? Let not my fate be unfair,  
What will the enmity of the camels and their drivers do ?  
Who is this luckless woman to thwart the will of Providence.

26

Aliens they were in reality, they couldn't own this wretched woman,  
Ill-will did they bear me, I smiled and welcomed them,  
When I remembered the camels in the morning, none I found there.

27

Beware the camelmen, come they have, or will come,  
Snatch they will Punhun from you and take him away,  
Wait they will not for a moment, and start journeying to their land.

28

The camels of brothers-in-law speed fast to their land,  
Let not their feet slip in haste,  
The camelmen crossed over the mountains easily and went afar.

29

Let not the sun affect the camelmen, and camels the hot winds,  
O God, let these camelmen come to no harm,  
Many are the camelmen in this world, but only Punhun I love.

*30*

The desert is vast, the burden unbearable, no oasis nearby,  
Says Latif, the simple woman depended entirely on camels,  
They will return if they so desired, depends on them,  
Where the lover is, and where is she searching for him?

*31*

Drive not the camels off, O camelmen, for God's sake,  
Ye friends, do sustain this bruised body,  
Sever not relationship mine with my Beloved.

*32*

Drive not the camels off, O camelmen, in haste,  
Take your slave beside, let her clutch the camel's hair,  
Kills me within the remembrance of my Beloved,  
In dishonour I shall plunge my race if I return before reaching Kech.

*33*

God, come they, seeing whom my happiness has no bounds,  
Somehow must I see the camelmen's land,  
Crossing the hill-passes, says Latif, let me hear the voice of my Beloved,  
Slave I shall be if I meet my mate.

*34*

I thought forever will be with me my beloved,  
Giving long rounds scattered they in the plains,  
In exchange for them I sold my life under the shade of trees.

*35*

I thought the guest for ever shall be my Beloved,  
They destroyed this wretched woman, and bestowed no mercy on me,  
All kinds of miseries they perpetrated on this slave,  
Cruelty they inflicted on me, O friends, last night.

*36*

The cruel brothers-in-law kidnapped my spouse,  
Brought they the messages to Punhun of Ari Jam<sup>1</sup>,

1. Punhun's father and ruler of Kech Makran.

They hatched conspiracy in secret, without giving me an inkling.  
They prepared to leave convincing the brave of trust false,  
Sisters, the camelmen turned the night into doom.

37

They took away my husband applying force,  
Desolate is Bhambhor, they left it in the morning.

38

They took away my Punhun, giving vent to ire,  
Now the mourning prevails, doomsday has descended.

39

In the evening I didn't guard against it, the morn brought pain,  
In pain for the camelman passed I have many days.

40

In the evening I didn't guard against it, the morn brought pain.,  
It shoots in the midnight, involving me in intense suffering,  
In pain for the camelman, mother, perished am I.

### VIII

#### Sur Leela-Chanesar (Lilā - Canēsar)

*Leela Chanesar* is a folk-tale of Sindh. The poems of *Leela - Chanesar* are concerned with the disillusionment of Leela when she finds that her trickery has recoiled on her and that she has lost her husband's love through her own folly.

1

Torture of loss of your affection kills the helpless ever,  
For the sake of God Beloved, go not far and be near,  
I am yours, throw away I shall the jewel into flames my Lord dear.

2

Throw away I shall into the flames the jewel, let fire consume the necklace,  
O svelte belle, says Sayid, resting you are what for,



Jealous the Raja is, a powerful Sardar,  
Reigns Chanesar Jam's pomp and dread near and far,  
So tranquillizing is Raja, and you exchanged him for a jewel.

## 3

Chanesar is crafty, knave are the other people, and base,  
You snap relationship with him for the sake of a necklace.

## 4

By the trinklet's tracery, O fool, obsessed you are,  
Debating with Chanesar you brought difference abreast,  
The page turned and you suffered the sorrow of separation.

## 5

The necklace was fake, but you saw it and were tempted,  
In reality before you were the pieces of glass placed,  
These troublesome pieces separate many from their friends best.

## 6

Blundered she seeing a precious thing, ego-stricken she became,  
Repeatedly uttered the people how ugly Leela was,  
With the sneers they kept her burning within, alas!  
Forgot she the fickleness of her childhood.

## 7

Wise I was in the world, sagacious amongst friends,  
A fault struck me and made me meek to look up.

## 8

May I not be wise, for the wise are afflicted with sorrows.  
The Beloved overlooked my faults and did favours to this innocent.

## 9

As if I was in cradle and couldn't comprehend,  
The issue of the jewel put me in the wrong,  
Sorrows I faced, offended with me was my husband.

10

Let go that union in which you think only of yourself,  
Seek that separation in which you seek Dasro.

11

Remember, Leela, all your traits,  
A row you kick up with your husband and up-braid him,  
One knows not what was in Chanesar's mind.

12

Don't expose your faults, Leela, by quarrels with Chanesar,  
The one you thought was yours, was a self-respecting Raja,  
Husbands like not their spouses to share love.

13

If you don't get him back by entreaties, continue them in full,  
Lose not hope ever, the Beloved is merciful.

14

Look at the wives who have jewels on their faces,  
All thought the beloveds would come inside their homes,  
Love came to the homes of those who blushed red seeing themselves.

15

Beloved, push me not away, I haven't any worth,  
Yearning for you, Beloved, has thrown me on this earth,  
You and you alone are my husband, of wives you have no dearth.

IX

### Sur Mumal Rano

*Mumal-Rano* is a folk-tale of Sindh. The poems of *Mumal Rano* describe Mumal's disillusionment, and her failure to obtain reconciliation with her lover, Rano. In the poems Rano is called Mendhro as well as Sodho. The Mendhros are a Sindhi tribe living in lower Sindh. Rano is also called Dholio, meaning darling, by Mumal in the verses of Shah Abdul Latif, and lives in Dhati<sup>1</sup>, which is another name for Ludho where he lived.

1 A small kingdom in those days in south-east Sindh bordering Rajasthan.

## 1

Met us yesterday a Sanyasin, a wandering Jogi, a mendicant,  
With dushala on his head and a beautiful string of beads,  
He showed himself, hurting our heart the faqir vanished.

## 2

Met us yesterday a Sanyasin, looking like a bright moon,  
Creating within us the sickness of separation, the faqir vanished.

## 3

Met us yesterday a Sanyasin with a thin layer of ash on his body,  
Green Shawl dangling around his shoulders, the Sami had golden garland.

## 4

Met us yesterday a Sanyasin with a thin layer of ash on his body,  
Secured we peace and tranquility from the clan of Jogis.

## 5

Inebriation took over the mendicant in the desert,  
He shed tears while talking about Kak<sup>1</sup>,  
A sharp point pricked the healed wounds and opened them again.

## 6

Burnt I the lamp the whole night, now the streaks of dawn are visible,  
Come back, O Mendhra, pining for you I am, come back for God's sake,  
Your remembrance made me despatch messages by Kak's crows.

## 7

I stood gazing at your path, faded the brightness of stars,  
the whole night I thought of only a camel and Mendhro,  
Tears streaked down my cheeks till the sun rose.

## 8

I kept pushing the wick up, and burnt was the entire oil,  
Return, my traveller-beloved, come riding the camel,  
I cried and cried, O Rana, and the night ended.

1. A charm house erected by Mumal.

9

Waned the Pleiades and in Orion belt the three stars waxed,  
The time of rendezvous passed, at night didn't come the prince,  
Hell with that burning night that melted away without my beloved,  
Pushing me away, my Dholio rested the night at Dhati.

10

Dhatis are so many, but Sodho won my heart, lo!  
Something he has done with my body, my Mendhro,  
However I may try my eyes forget not my Rano.

11

Whispered Rano at night something mysterious,  
Without him, friends, I can hardly breathe,  
Gone away he is, return he will, hopeful am I.

12

Be not sulky, make up your quarrel, keep not far,  
The wound of separation smarts, long I for a little love,  
Says Latif, enough for me is one sight of my love,  
If only I were near you, O Sodha, ever happy I would be.

13

Kak burnt, vanished the trees, burnt the beautiful place,  
Without you my beloved, my heart is gripped by a dread,  
Make good quickly, beloved, the promises with me you made.

14

Guardian I have none, nor spouse, nor bond, nor any relation,  
Without you, beloved, I burn in the fire of separation,  
O traveller, convey to Rano of Dhati, my message of desperation.

15

Remember to deliver the message to Rano of Dhati,  
Kill me, O Mendhra, and the rankling wounds of separation,  
If only you returned, turning the camel to this worthless one.

## X

## Umar Marui (Umar Mārūi)

*Umar Marui* is a folk-tale of Sindh. The poems of *Umar-Marui* describe the feelings of Marui locked in her prison-rooms by Umar, the ruler of Amarkot. She longs to be freed by her people, the rustic camelmen and goatherds of Malir<sup>1</sup>.

## 1

None comes to ask after me, no messenger, nor a camelman bothers,  
None took trouble to come from the direction of my brothers,  
Who will deliver messages and bring me the news of theirs.

## 2

O camelman, bring here now anyone from the village folks,  
That the dirty bounds of the fort may be glad,  
His feet covered with dust of Thar<sup>2</sup> with eyes I shall wipe,  
For God's sake, says Latif, make not any delay,  
Who will spend life here? The palace chokes my breath.

## 3

God, bring the camelmen to take my messages,  
I am theirs even if they refuse to accept,  
The ink I have in hand, let someone bring the paper,  
Tears fall on the pen and allow me not to write.

## 4

My bodice has hundreds of stitches, and the *loi* is tattered,  
I spun not a yard, hoping help from parents,  
God, protect what covered my body in Dhati,

## 5

My bodice has hundreds of stitches, and the *loi* is tattered,  
Let my locks remain greasy and their hair disarrayed,  
A longing is alive in my heart to see the face of Maru,  
Like a miserable maid, as I am, I may go to my native land.

---

1. A small place in Tharparkar district of Sindh from where Marui was kidnapped by Umar the ruler of Amarkot.

6

I have ruined my beauty, O Sumra<sup>1</sup>, and sullied my face,  
Fate compelled me to go reft of beauty, where to go,  
without it is not grace.

7

I have ruined my beauty, O Sumra, how shall I return to my homeland,  
Without beauty like this how at home shall I see the goatherds.

8

Came here as I was, like that let me go back to them,  
My return, says Latif, will be like the blushes of seasonal rains,  
A reproach and a bane is my life passed in the palace till I die,  
Come thus here, I fell in the eyes of my husband,  
How shall I lift my head high in front of my Marus<sup>2</sup>.

9

Never wish I to live, friends, meaningless is this life,  
With what eyes and face shall I go to Malir,  
Who shall I blame? My fate is as it is.

10

Forget this face, why don't you swallow poison and die?  
What if those born in Malir should your relationship belie?  
How will they, O Marui, to call you one of them with each other vie.

11

Don't you ever offer me advice to break my chastity,  
After a few days I shall go there, O Hamir<sup>3</sup>,  
Lest I raise not my head high there with pride.

12

For what crime am I a prisoner here, why have I been imprisoned?  
Why this reproach is hurled at me, why have I been chained?  
If I die here, send my body to Malir.

---

1. Umar, the ruler of Sumra dynasty.

2. Maru is a tribe living in Thar desert.

3. Ruler.

13

For my country if I die here longing,  
Build my grave, O Sumra, near my countrymen,  
Let the smell of creepers of my ancestors perfume my grave,  
If my dead body is sent to Malir, I shall live even though dead.

14

The camelmen came from there and brought the happy news,  
Don't forget your husband, O simple woman, see you die not,  
You will go back there, for a few days you are here in the fort.

15

Weep not, don't shout, make not complaints however,  
When the world sleeps, raise your hands in prayer,  
Betrothed where you are, Marui, you will see that land sure.

XI

### Sur Kamod

The word *Kamod* is a tadbhav of the Sanskrit word 'Kamoda' meaning sensual woman. The poems under *Sur Kamod* deal with the folk-tale of Nuri-Jam Tamachi (Nūri-Jām Tamāci). Jam Tamachi, the Sama ruler of the territory around the lake Kinjhur, falls in love with Nuri, the fisherwoman, and marries her. In the poems under this Sur, the poet depicts the love and humility of Nuri, and the generosity of Jam Tamachi, the worshipper of beauty in all forms.

1

You are a Sama, I am from Gandhri clan, a mine of faults,  
Seeing the faces of your queens, see that you ditch not Nuri.

2

You are Tamachi, ruler of the place, I am a fisherwoman,  
Your name goes with mine, abandon me never in separation.

3

The nets and the reed-baskets, and small boats are their property.  
They row their boats before sunrise and fish within Tamachi's domains,  
With the fishermen the Sama tied himself in relationship.

4

She wouldn't cut or sale, nor would she catch or trade in fish,  
The basket she threw deliberately into the well,  
Conducted she in the way as was customary in Sama's house,

5

Presented Nuri to Sama the torus of lotus of the season,  
Present were all Sama women on the occasion,  
Being lured he adored her and carried her away in the buggy.

6

Free from pride was the fisherwoman's mind,  
With her amorous eyes the Rao she enticed,  
Of all the persons she enured Sama skilfully.

7

Hands in the fish, she adorns herself,  
Rao had already in mind to make this maid his spouse,  
Many mysterious tales Tamachi's body to her conveyed.

8

Live long, beloved, allow not your smiles to dwindle,  
Adore you my eyes, never be away from me,  
Stay, O Tamachi, a few days on the shores of Kinjhur.

9

Water beneath, up the surface of the lake and vegetation around,  
Taste and flavour of Jam in between abounds,  
The northerly blows and the Kinjhur becomes a rocking cradle.

10

Water beneath, up the surface of the lake, and the beloved beside,  
Many things happened and nothing unattended remained.



*XII*

## Sur Ghatu

The word Ghatu means the hunter, here the fisherman or diver. The Sur is based on a folk-tale of *Moriro*. Moriro and his six brothers, sons of Obhayo, were fishermen. Moriro having a deformity was not allowed to go for fishing. The six brothers were brave and fished in the sea near Kalachi, now Karachi. They were advised never to go near the dangerous whirlpool, where there lived a huge crocodile. But the brave men acted against this advice and were drowned in the whirlpool and eaten up by the crocodile. Here the human being is alluded to as the whirlpool, and the lust and avarice within him as the crocodile.

## 1

The all-knowing lost their way, the senses of the brave blighted,  
Went they together on the tide, and faced the sea delighted,  
The helpless forgot all tracks of time that taught them the tricks.

## 2

The dew soaked their turbans, the light descended,  
Handles floated on the surface, the gibstaffs were carried away.

## 3

Fury rages in the whirlpool of Kalachi, whoever goes  
there never back gets,  
No one can ever tell what hampers the operation of nets.

## 4

Taking long lances, the warriors went to Kalachi yesterday,  
They waited but the brothers never returned to the bay,  
Over such a special group the whirlpool held sway.

## 5

No rafts in the ocean, the nets weren't at their place,  
O mother, the boatmen brought not the boats back to their destination.

6

Fishermen went to Kalalchi yesterday after thorough investigation,  
Mother, I sit and bear the pain given to me by these boatmen,  
Leaving me in intense grief, they vanished in the deeps.

7

No smell of the fish in the market, nor do their flakes fly about,  
Where earlier the fish was everywhere and in plenty,  
People go back disappointed seeing the places empty.

8

When near they went, they returned, but when they went far,  
The fishermen called them, searched for them,  
but in despair they returned.

9

Gauging they entered the whirlpool, gauged they the deeps,  
Big fish they killed and their faces emitted happiness.

10

The way they spread their nets on the still waters,  
the fish wouldn't be caught.  
Adopt the hardship of seafaring, gird up the muscles you aught,  
These are only the shallows, the real sea is far ahead.

XIII

Sur Sorath

This Sur is based on the folk-tale of *Sorath-Rai Diach* (Sōrath-Rāi Diāc). These poems are concerned with the visit of Bijal, the bard, to the palace of Rai Diach. They describe the singing and playing on musical instrument by Bijal, the chaffering for the musician's reward and the grief of Sorath, King Rai Diach's spouse, when the minstrel won his way and obtained, as a faqir had foretold, the head of the king.

## 1

Setting all hope in God, he departed from here,  
 The Charan tied with his harp tassels and jingling bells there,  
 The royal palace of Rai Diach seeing from distance standing bare,  
 And prayed to God that very moment there,  
 "Merciful God, help Rao in my singing be delighted, and care."

## 2

Walking down a distance, the bard came from the land alien,  
 Standing there the mendicant cried for a head in vision.

## 3

"Walking down a distance, arrived I have, just now,  
 If the dawn takes time to break, dismiss me even now,  
 O Sorath's good spouse, ponder over this well somehow,  
 Favour the beggar who in the midst of foes has come."

## 4

He sang to Rao the whole night by the wall of the fort,  
 Jewels and diamonds were rained on him, but touched he none,  
 He was appropriately rewarded, being a bard, the traditional one.

## 5

The king was happy and offered the minstrel a lot in charity,  
 The beggar strung his instrument, and ensued many notes,  
 "The dearth of worldly things for me is not, I have them in host,  
 For God's sake, cut off your head and give me in alms, O King."

## 6

"These offerings I accept not, nor to go back is afar,  
 I have apprised you of the secret decision that while coming I made,  
 Understand that, O spouse of Sorath, without achieving  
 which return I shall not,  
 From a far away place to meet you I have come."

## 7

The head he begs, he demands it, satisfied without it he will never be,  
 He spares not the poor, and kills handsome kings,

He pulls down the Nawabs and them to death he squeezes  
God, morning or evening he is out for a kill, none he spares.

8

"Salute you I ten times, O bard," says Rai Diach.  
"The head is worth nothing, and that's what you demand,  
If my head is of use to you, twenty times I shall cut it and give it to you."

9

All the three in tune were wed, the chords, the dagger and the neck,  
"For no such price, O Charan, this journey you made,  
God be praised, O bard, that you sought the head?"

10

A song whimperd on the harp, notes ensued from the weird instruments,  
The skilful master from the start in motion set the chords,  
Diach at once saw clear and manifest the meaning's power,  
He drew out his dagger and plunged deep in his skull.

11

The flower of Girnar<sup>1</sup> is plucked, and the city laments,  
Many waiting women like Sorath stand up, weep in these moments,  
The head of Diach with crowning locks to Bijal they gave,  
Bitterly the women lament: "The king died the last night."

XIV

Sur Sarang

In the Indian music tradition, Sur Sarang is one of the raginis of Sur Megh. It is, however, said that the poet took this Sur from the warbles of bird known as Sarang. In the poems under this Sur, Shah 'Abdul Latif symbolizes God with the rainy weather, and the rain with love. He speaks about the parched earth transformed into pastures, and the raining of God's mercy through clouds bringing happiness and prosperity to the people of Sindh.

<sup>1</sup> A city in Saurashtra where Rai Diach ruled.

## 1

God has brought the clouds, see them, says Latif,  
The rolling waters of rain have made the footing green with grass,  
God with his grace has clad the paths in verdure,  
The blithe rain has come, the wayfarers draw fresh breath again.

## 2

Today too in the northern sky are gathered clouds black as hair,  
The lightning flashes bring the rain wearing crimson cloak,  
Friends in far away lands are drawn to me by rain.

## 3

When it rains, it rains, it's the season of rain,  
The cows desist from ill temper and allow to be milked without strain,  
Calves on the tracks will shake off their weakness and be healthy again,

## 4

O rain, if only you learnt from my eyes how to rain.  
From falling in drops day and night you will not refrain,

## 5

The cloud in the head and the cloudiness wouldn't leave the eyes,  
Like my Beloved are the clouds hovering above in the skies,  
Raise your eyes, O friend, and laugh, and see away the pain flies.

## 6

The cloudiness does not leave the eyes, whether clouds exist or not,  
Remembering the Beloved, tears streak down the cheeks,  
Let them shriek and weep whose beloveds are on their way.

## 7

Adorning the clouds, the lightning brought the rain,  
Raining clouds filled the dried streams and drains.

8

Today the clouds brought out the colours from the flashes,  
The desert plays on the instruments like *Sarangis*, *Surandas* and harps,  
Pitchers the clouds poured by the side of the walls.

9

The rain and the love, the same things they mean,  
If it does desire to fall, the clouds do scream,  
Stand as a cloud I shall, if prepared to come you seem.

10

It rains the whole night, in the morning to rain it ceases,  
If you yearn for the Beloved, the rain within you He releases,  
And even at dawn, the cloud from raining never eases.

XV

Sur Asa

*Sur Asa* is again one of the ragas in the Indian music tradition. In the poems under *Sur Asa* the poet depicts the intense longing of the lover for his Beloved God and describes the mystery that is God and God that is a mystery.

1

In the infinite I search, I find not the Guide's limit,  
The Beloved's beauty has neither length nor any width,  
Yearning here is limitless, there the Beloved is blithe.

2

Across life's ocean, with "I" as guide, none has set foot,  
Seek oneness and destroy your duality up to the hilt,  
Shed your tears of "Being" at the altar of "Oneness."

3

Eschew duality, Beloved, spare me from ego,  
Merge, "I" in "You", so that I reach You.

4

Those who lost their 'Being' absorbed they in God,  
Stand or sit not they in Namaz, nor do they prostrate,  
For they destroyed themselves and in the Real Existence they merged.

5

Strange are the habits that have my eyes deep,  
They own others' pain and in their pain weep,  
They entangle themselves there where weapons bring no gain.

6

It's the "Truth" that has battered my body into pieces,  
Without the Beloved I can't take a single breath,  
God and God alone in my soul pervades.

7

The foolish will not solve the puzzle, they see up and down,  
How will they gain a sight of the Beloved, who have  
jealousy in their eyes.

8

Come and sit in my eyes and I slide down the lids,  
The world may not see you and I see none else.

9

Renounce the logic, go over crossing the destruction,  
It's only the sign, comprehend it and to others mention.

10

The one we yearn for, we are "Him."  
Go away now you "whim", we comprehend the Beloved.

XVI

Sur Ripa

The literal meaning of the word "Ripa" is calamity. The poems under *Sur Ripa* depict the pangs of separation from God. The poet considers separation as great

calamity that has befallen him. In spite of his efforts he does not succeed in shaking off the cloudiness of love that had intensified in his head and eyes.

1

The northerly blows with force, I have neither  
a blanket nor a sheet cover,  
Parching will un-nerve those who have tattered huts.

2

The northerly blows with force, I have neither  
a blanket nor a sheet cover,  
All the night through I pulled the head-cover over myself to cover.

3

Learn the skill of love, my beloved, from the kiln.  
It burns day and night, but not a vapour does slink.

4

As in the rains the vegetation grows on the plains,  
The same way in the separation of the Beloved  
grow within me woes immense.

5

The fire was ignited by the Beloved, it now rages within,  
How can it be extinguished when it's being inflamed by the Beloved.

6

The clouds loom large in my head, and the cloudiness leaves not my eyes,  
My heart today was flooded with my Beloved's remembrance limitless,  
Come my Friend, take care of me, engulfed by separation am I.

7

The lover thinks, express he should not to anyone his woes,  
How will He remain within when the eyes shed tears, and heart pines.

8

It ever rains within me, what shall I do with the clouds,  
All the time the remembrance of my Beloved within me rains,



9

It's not fair to express the pain, to preserve it is difficult too,  
The misfortune has struck me with woes that have gripped my soul.

10

The eyes close not in sleep, slothful they become never,  
They close and open in the process of remembering You ever,

XVII

Sur Khahori

*Sur Khāhōrī* has been named according to its subject. *Khahori* means a seeker. The poems under this Sur depict the poet's despair and distress created by the departure of the seekers from the 'bald' hill where they had pitched their huts for some time in search of grains, and where in their company the poet was spiritually inspired.

1

I saw them, O mother, the folks, who saw the Beloved,  
Find I not the way in which to describe them.

2

I saw them, O mother, the folks, who saw the Beloved,  
I wish to stay a night at the perfect men's place,  
Their knowledge alone serves as a raft in seas deep.

3

With a thin layer of dust on their bodies they pass along.  
They do not amidst the foolish talk and throng,  
Perfection's spell binds them my Beloved's tale to tell.

4

Go across the other side and bring news of the Khahoris,  
How did they for the wild grains the hills searched.

5

The group of Khahoris went into mountain Pabu <sup>1</sup>,  
To go and locate these Khahoris a messenger I urged,  
Passing the night in the wilderness, the mountain they searched.

6

Those inhabitants of the wilds who the mountains  
explored and crossed the passes,  
Were showered love upon, for they wandered and were  
scorched by hot winds.

7

Parched faces, worn-out footwear they wear.  
They reached the places where even guides to tread didn't dare.

8

Burnt the woods and levelled, and revealed the secret path,  
The seeker and the sought met each other there.

9

Fine is that desolate place where only one Beloved you have,  
Change the path where millions of evil people live.

10

The grain seekers are not in the mountain, without them it looks desolate,  
Ask I about their news if they would come again for the grains.

*XVIII*

### Sur Barvo Sindhi

*Barvo* is the name of Ragini in Indian music. This Ragini has been given a Sindhi colour by the poet. The poems under *Sur Barvo Sindhi* emit the beauty and fragrance of the Beloved God. They describe the amorous playfulness and carelessness of the Beloved, and faithfulness, care and concern of the lover.

1. Name of a mountain.

## 1

What for did you go and become others' slave,  
Be the slave of merciful God, the creator of the world.  
Happy will he be, who loves God alone.

## 2

Dependent on others is my life. The Beloved is not mine,  
How the pain like a boulder struck the heart mine,  
He showed Himself in a dream and humoured me fine.

## 3

If only you come once when I remember you,  
Place I shall my eye-lids under your feet and make a bed of my hair,  
Beloved, the whole life I shall live as your slave ever.

## 4

You can never describe how by love the heart is afflicted,  
The fate planted the roots, the eyes shed tears,  
O heart, have patience, yesterday the Beloved left.

## 5

Some are far even though near, some are near even though far,  
Some you never remember, some you forget never,  
Like the horn-curve of a buffalo, the Beloved with my  
heart is intertwined for ever.

## 6

They called me and killed me with their eyes,  
They disposed of my flesh and left behind only the skeleton,  
"Be in counsel with God in patience", wounded me  
the Beloved with smiles,

## 7

Love like that, it perplexes the brave,  
During the day you search the hills, the whole night you weep  
Every moment that passes is consumed by the talk of the Beloved.

8

Everyone claims to be a sincere friend, only a verbal talk it is,  
It's so simple, but you test the sincerity when the occasion arises.

9

Near the heart there is only one Beloved, there shouldn't be many,  
Give your heart to that one alone, even though hundreds long for it,  
Philanderers are those who throw their hearts everywhere.

10

Where did you learn, O Beloved, this act of a butcher,  
Get hold of a sharp scimitar, kill me not with the blunt one,  
Open the wounds and see how the pain in them the holes drills.

XIX

### Sur Ramakali

In Indian music tradition, *Ramakali* is one of the Raginis of Hindol. The essence of what has been said in Gita about the Yoga and the Yogis has been described by the poet in *Sur Ramakali*. The composition of these poems by the poet is a result of his separation from the Jogis in whose company he remained for a few years.

1

I search, and smell their fragrance, the ascetics have left,  
Live I shall not without their company.

2

Help me, forget I not the ascetics for a moment,  
Footprints of the Jogis I put in efforts to trace,  
Tracing their path, let me go after them for ever,  
Move I shall day and night, I shall not live without them.

3

Sleeping on bed I was, woke me up the agony of love,  
Those who woke me up, I shall not live without them.

4

Riding the annihilation, come out and the ego eschew,  
The attire lost you, and the attire you lost,  
That one alone Sami is, who completely himself lost.

5

The ascetics with pierced ears, poked lobes, the Kapri wearing earrings,  
They, the lovers, always sit confronting the northerly cold winds,  
They tortured their bodies, and burnt their "beings",  
The annihilated faqirs, let's go and see their places.

6

If you want to be a Jogi, sever relations all,  
Going to the door of friends, don't you bow and cry,  
Beg at the door of Sanyasins, who, comprehending,  
claim not to have comprehended.

7

If you want to be a Jogi, kill all desires and ambitions,  
Become the slave of those who are slaves of the slaves,  
With the sword of patience destroy all malice,  
So that, O Naga, your name is linked with the Lāhūfīs<sup>1</sup>.

8

If you want to be a Jogi, control your mind and subdue it,  
Ignite unextinguishable fire in your heart, and with sincerity  
count rosary beads,  
With humility and patience bear with God's will.

9

If you want to be a Jogi, drain down the cup of "Nothingness",  
Lose yourself completely, and eliminate "I" nevertheless,  
So that O seeker, enjoy you may the ecstasy of "oneness".

1. The fourth and final stages in the Sufi tradition to be one with God.

10

For eliminating pleasure, the Swamis are by a dagger of a kind slain,  
By day their bodies ache and the whole night they suffer in pain,  
Hard and sick is the life, O mother, that of the Jogis.

XX

### Sur Kapaiti

The literal meaning of the word "Kāpāifī" is 'woman spinner'. In the poems under *Sur Kapaiti*, the poet describes the seekers, symbolized as Kapaitis, and God symbolised as a 'Saraf' or Discerner. Everyone will find his value before God according to the spinning done.

1

Even if, you spinner, spun the wheel alone,  
Perhaps, saw the discerner a fault in your thread.

2

You keep spinning so long as this life lasts,  
Every spinner who spun the thread was liked and accepted,  
Those who learn and gain knowledge, lose not from  
their hands the pledget.

3

The moment passes, and yesterday you curse,  
Get up and spin the wheel, sit not forlorn,  
Lest the discerner return to you the faulty twine tomorrow.

4

Lost you sitting many a day when you could spin,  
Never you went near the spinning wheel, O foolish one, for a moment,  
How with pride will you lift your head before the Beloved.

5

Spin even with the broken wheel till the design is ready,  
Don't you form the habit of whiling away the time,

Try not to know who will spin on the new wheel when ready.

6

Go not against your fate, go on spinning and fear,  
Always do the spinners, O mother, keep spinning.

7

Those with jealousy in mind spun the thread fine,  
Accepted not the discerners a single length of their lot.

8

With all love in their heart those who spun the twine rough,  
The discerners accepted without weighing the whole lot.

9

The ones who learnt not to spin fine, let them turn out the rough,  
Finding their thread fine, they will weigh and take away,  
Even if rough and less, the helpless one was shown kindness.

10

In their mind the spinning wheel is, they spin at dawn,  
Even if they spin not, the Beloved is fond of them.

XXI

Sur Purab

*Sur Purab* is again one of the raginis of Hindol. In this Sur the poet calls *Purab* (the east) the land of his Beloved and the goal of the Samis and the Purabias and those living in the east.

1

Pay my regards, O crow, and touch the feet of my Beloved,  
The message I give you forget not on your way,  
For God's sake, says Latif, speak in secret,  
Tell him what I tell you, O crow, in all happiness.

2

Bring the news of the Beloved who is in the alien land,  
All your feathers with gold I shall embed,  
Hover over the houses and to my Beloved give the message.

3

In yearning for the Beloved, I wander like a faqir,  
Choose me He may, perhaps, and cast his eyes on me.

4

Comforted me the eyes that the Beloved raised laughing,  
All woes were eliminated by the smile of the Beloved,  
People, perhaps, thought the hunger reduced Sami's pain.

5

Call yourself a Sami, demand you happiness, but torture not your body,  
On one pretext or the other you beg from people flour and grains,  
O hermit, you pierced your ears for the sake of good tastes.

6

The spiritual ones left the places of prayer at midnight,  
Heard I not the talks of Sanyasins at dawn,  
Such are these Jogis, they sympathize not with the griefstricken.

7

The spiritual ones left the place of prayer this morning,  
Emit they the fragrance of musk, these *Adesis*.<sup>1</sup>

8

They departed on the path to reach the east,  
They deserted this home and pitched tents elsewhere.

1. Wandering ascetics.



9

I face the east and gaze and gaze,  
 From the friends I received not any kind of news,  
 Aliens they were, they took to the path and left,

10

It's the east that kills me, to whom shall I complain,  
 Rendering advice to the folks I have gone mad,  
 I am not like them, but still with them I fell in love,

XXII

### Sur Karayalu

*Sur Karayalu* Takes its name from the subject of the poems included in this Sur. Karayalu means a Peacock or a swan. The atmosphere prevailing in the world has been called *Luru* or tumult and the knaves have been compared with the cranes, while the seekers have been called the swans.

1

While setting on flight, said he, "He is one,"  
 Passed he through the darkness where the birds were tested.

2

He parted with the cranes and soared in the skies,  
 The swan went to the spring where his Beloved he found.

3

Eyes gauging the deeps, standing it started at the surface,  
 To the pearls in the deeps it is accustomed.

4

Worrying you are, be not struck with wonder  
 Cover up the warbles of your deceit,  
 Shun their company who of "I" and "We" talk,  
 Merge your mind in the seekers to be close to union.

5

If only once you ponder and live with the swans,  
Never again the company you will keep with the cranes.

6

They fly at the time when the folks are asleep,  
They set their mind on the pearls for picking in the deeps,  
What will the Parheris<sup>1</sup> do reflecting on their operations.

7

Whose food is pearls, they are the swans of the Beloved,  
They dive not into the boggy place to hunt the fish,  
Folks recognized them not, for they flocked with the cranes.

8

Died all the peacocks, not a single goose remained,  
The land was dominated again by the false glossy ibis.

9

Swans are swans, none is dirty amongst them,  
The place vibrates with happiness where they settle at dusk.

10

Don't consider them lean and thin snakes, they are infant cobras,  
If they bite the elephant, move it will not from its place.

*XXIII*

### Sur Prabhati

*Sur Prabhati* is a ragini sung as the dawn breaks. The poet here calls human beings mendicants and God a generous Giver.

1

It's not the custom of bards that their harp be hanging on a peg,  
The pleasant morning with vengeance you treated,  
Who will call you a bard if from singing you edged.

1. Water birds.

2

Keeping your instrument by the pillow, you sleep the whole night,  
It goes not well with the respect in which the bards delight.

3

Those who have no comforts are called Charans,  
They ask for the way to the wilderness, with harps on their shoulders.

4

Charan is indisposed, and it's a long way ahead, tell my Beloved,  
Bestow mercy on me here, difficult it is to go ahead.

5

Gift depends not on caste, achieves it the one who toils,  
With whims of the innocent bears the generous Jam,  
That who passes the night at the king's is spared from harm.

6

Even if you know, say you know not, open this door is only  
for the ignorant,  
Only those were accepted at this door who loved not their self,  
Delighted King belongs only to the innocent.

7

Himself the Generous, reproaches the mendicant,  
"Leaving my doors why did you beg at those different?"  
That's why you faced the days difficult.

8

Beg from the one, O bard, who gives everyday,  
False are the doors of the world, O bard, you beg day to day,  
Come tomorrow, they themselves will hurl reproaches at your face.

9

You are Generous, I am desirous, You are the Giver, I am a sinner,  
You are a touchstone, I am iron, into gold  
I shall turn with your touch.

10

You are the Giver and the beggars others are,  
Rains are seasonal, You rain for ever,  
If my home you visit, the respect I shall earn even though full of faults.

XXIV

Sur Dahar

*Daharu* literally means a vale between two huge sand dunes. The poet here describes his thoughts while passing through a "Dahar" in the Thar desert area of Sindh. Earlier, streams flowed here but now one finds only the expanses of desert. How the worldly prosperity is transitory is the theme of these poems.

1

O Lord, strange we see is your reign,  
You drown the leaves fathoms deep and float the pebbles,  
If only you come, respect I shall earn with all my faults.

2

Omnipotent you are, you are merciful,  
Lift not your hand of mercy from my head, Yours I am.

3

Seek I the grace of the magnitude Your name carries,  
You are shade and protection without pillar or post,  
What shall I tell you, knowing-all You are.

4

Many are the husbands of others, for me my Husband is a great deal,  
Covered He my faults with His hand over my head.

5

O one asleep, wake up, and sleep not so long,  
Union with Him you will achieve not while sleeping.

## 6

Sleep a while and wake up a while, sleep not so long,  
This is a resting place only for a while, you thought it a  
place to live for ever.

## 7

Sleeping will not do, remember the Beloved,  
The moments will pass away and repent you will.

## 8

Take not the dew as dew that fell at dawn,  
It was only the night that wept seeing those in grief.

## 9

They flock together and sever not the love  
that binds them,  
Look at the birds, O men, be bound in love.

## 10

The fate brought the cranes here, their living  
place is the mountain,  
None can blame, for the livelihood is  
given by the Giver.

From *Saruds*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

## Selections

### MURAD FAQIR

MURAD FAQIR (Murād Fakīr, 1729-1800) was a saint-poet and a mystic. A Shia Muslim, he was a disciple of Rohal Fiqir and like him he expounded Indian philosophy in his poetry. Many of his compositions are not extant, but a few that are available bear eloquent testimony to his mastery over the language and the art of poetry. He seems to have acquired amazing proficiency in the employment of both Indian prosody and Persian metres.

*I*

M'arfat<sup>1</sup>

*1*

If you can, fire of love you kindle,  
Says Murad, on the flame of fire the moths speak,  
"Strive hard, you can never meet the Beloved while alive,  
It's the dead who enter the Friend's court."

*2*

They preach but do not live up to it,  
They know not, but only prattle what they hear,  
Says Murad, malice in their mind they fail to cover,  
However deceitful, they expose themselves ever.

*3*

Like frost in water in the Beloved you are,  
Says Murad, don't see the illusion, for Him don't look far.

*4*

Every one reads words, none reads the point,  
The page of union, none understands,  
Says Murad, you will repent for its meaning later,  
The word has no meaning for the one who doesn't see  
the Friend in his heart.

*II*

Sur Suhni<sup>2</sup>

Aroused by love, she doesn't care for life,  
To return will be sneered at seeing the river in spate,  
As if dancing over the waves, she does skate,  
Says Murad, after all she will meet "Sahar"<sup>3</sup>, her mate

1. Spiritual.

2. These are the folk-tales of Sind

3. Suhni's beloved.

*III*Sur Sasui<sup>1</sup>

None has taken him away, he is in your hold,  
 Why search him in the hills he is in your fold,  
 Says Murad, he is hidden in your mould,  
 Nearer than yourself, with you he is rolled,

*IV*

## Sur Nuri

She lured, Rao<sup>2</sup> with her amorous glances,  
 As king Samma's<sup>2</sup> spouse, in palaces she dances,  
 All fishermen exempted from taxes big and small,  
 Says Murad, Tamachi waived off levies all,  
 Freed from liabilities they play joyously on the lake Kinjhur<sup>3</sup>.

*V*

## Leela Chanesar

The necklace you thought was real is a counterfeit,  
 Many Leelas were cheated by Kounru<sup>4</sup> full of deceit,  
 With captivating conspiracy, she doth lure man,  
 Says Murad, be careful, if you can,  
 Else, for ever you will lose Dasro<sup>6</sup>, your man.

*VI*

## Sur Ghatu

Lovers, who the whirlpools of Kalachi fought,  
 Caught by crocodiles of love, returned not,  
 Only after death, says Murad, they had a glimpse of the darling,  
 Life real is for those who die while living.

1. & 5 These are the folk-tales of Sindh.
2. Samma ruler.
3. A lake in Sindh.
4. Leela's maid.
6. Name given by Leela to her lover.

*VII*

Bayt Purab

1

Jogi, why pierce ears for rings of any kind?  
Instead, with circles of silence, surround your mind,  
Continuously, O brave one, let bugles of love beep,  
Tie cords of right conduct and stone-pillow of love keep.

2

Ganga, Dwarka, Kashi within their heart are,  
Neither wander in east or west, nor do they go far,  
Says Murad, subduing their mind,  
They perform within pilgrimage of all kind,  
Those who meet in Girnar their Guru,  
Constantly enjoy his company true.

3

Fascinated by Rama, they left Kashi behind,  
Free from mundane matters, with tension-free mind,  
Those immortal Avadhootas<sup>2</sup> paths of love tread,  
Journeys terminate after they meet the Mate,  
They live, says Murad, in the world of oneness,  
Those naked sanyasins meet the Master face to face.

4

In reality a thief, posing as a saint,  
Says Murad, with dust of deceit, your face you paint,  
Mastering the mind, forget worldly ordeal,  
Subduing the self, join company cordial.

*VIII*

Bayt Mutfarqa<sup>1</sup>

1

Make intellect an oil-press, and your mind the pressing man,  
Let oxen of consciousness work ceaselessly, if you can,

1. Miscellaneous.



Rejecting husk, press oil seeds pure,  
And get extract of aromatic oil, sure.

With a nose-pin and reins in rider's hand,  
A camel takes cargo and takes orders to move or stand,  
Takes him, where he likes while reins he does hold,  
Like that, says Murad, mind, by my crony, is controlled.

Crows are cawing, where geese used to glide,  
In place of peacocks, says Murad, roam animals wild,  
Parrots chatting with owls, sitting by their side.

### IX

#### Samvad (Sasuī)

##### 1

- Q. Why go to Ketch? Why wander in the wilderness?  
He is neither in Hab, Hingore nor in mountain place,  
Says Murad, to Bhambhor turn back your face,  
Search not here and there, within your mind is his place.
- A. Away from the friend, how can a lover live?  
To return, O Murad, how dare you advice give?  
If he himself gives you a cup of love's wine,  
In valleys, you will wail, for the rest of your life.

##### 2

- Q. Why wail and weep for the friend,  
With you he is, let your search end,  
Says Murad, go back, O stupid female,  
Within you, He is, only peep in your inner pail.
- A. Those who find his abode in inner recess,  
Can neither sit nor sleep at any place,  
Says Murad, they return not, who see him face to face,  
Obstruct not lovers, O you love-less!

##### 3

- Q. Obstructing lovers? Oh no, correct is my clue  
May all lovers succeed and get through.

The mate is in mind; there only you can find,  
Meet him within and also win applause true.

- A. Applause is in their fate whose struggles never end,  
In the passes they find the footprints of their friend,  
Seeking unity, forgetting duality, rested not they,  
Shouting for Haq their way they went.

4

- Q. Shout within, no nonsense outside,  
In man, God, His secret doth confide,  
Return and realise, He is nearer than your vein,  
Go back O blockhead, and meet Him there and then

- A. Easily He can't be found, even if there,  
"He is your God", I heard Quran declare,  
And since I heard "All is He", I am sleepless,  
Only after that, Him I realised in the self.

5

- Q. If realized Him, why this quest?  
Wander not hither and thither, in your mind is His nest,  
"He encompasses all," Why this strife?  
Says Murad, He is life within life.

- A. For His sake, my life I do proffer  
His name doth every part of my body utter.  
Why deprecate my devotion, which you lack,  
Say what you may, never shall I go back.

6

- Q. Display not devotion, move with your mind,  
Within your own self, Murad, Him you can find,  
Whom you consider foes, your friends they are,  
Remove the screen and find Him not far.

- A. Those who know the self, with Him they become one,  
Unware of existence, they forget early fun,  
- Absorbed in Him, talk they never,  
Says Murad, by love exalted they are ever.

## 7

Q. Slumbering away the whole night, you get up only at sunrise  
 You are not the one, who, before death, dies,  
 Devoid of devotion, your own self you commend,  
 No vibrating vigour is in you, don't defend,  
 Even now, you find Him within, this is not the end.

A. What can I say? The same things we both mean,  
 Only she will meet Him, whose love is keen.

*Bayts*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Hari Daryani "Dilgir"

### Erotic Poems

JALAL KHATI ET AL.

## 1

JALAL KHATI (Jalāl Khaṣī; c. 1755?) came from the village Mundar in the Dadu district of Sindh. By profession he was a washerman. A contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif, he is considered to be the top-most poet of the erotic trend in his times. A large number of his poems are extant.

## 1

Adorned beautiful body emitting flashes like lightning,  
 And the teeth in the mouth shining like pearls,  
 Pink face flaming like the sun, wonderful straight nose of  
     of a royal descent,  
 Transparent neck, cheeks like white flowers, the waist of a lioness,  
 The gait of an elephant, elegant toes of a *chiho*<sup>1</sup>, lustrous tufts of hair,  
 Says Jalal, are the qualities of my beloved with a pleasant  
     figure and a divine face.

## 2

My beloved's long black hair is like the dark night and soft like lotus,  
 Her beautiful neck like cowage, her stature straight like the cypress,  
 Her nose is like a parrot's beak, and cheeks like the *phoga*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Her eyelashes are like sharp pointed arrows,

1. A small reddish-spotted bird.

2. A seasonal red insect.

The lioness' waist, camphor-like white teeth and eyebrows  
like bubblebee and snakes,  
Says Jalal, her radiant beauty has tarnished many a hue of the rains.

*II*

Kumbhar (Kumbhār, 18th century) was a poet of renown in his times; he was a contemporary of Jalal Khati and Shah 'Abdul Latif, but no biographical details are available. It is said that he was born in a village near Bubak in the Dadu district of Sindh. A large number of his erotic poems are extant.

My beloved's eyes are like daggers, arrows and spears,  
her face like the moon,  
Her bud-like lips remain ever red,  
Her hair soft like lotus and body velvet like red bug,  
her beauty glows like a firefly on flight in the dark night,  
She watched me minutely from a distance,  
Says Kumbhar, my breathing eased and her sight eliminated my pain.

*III*

Sabar Mochi (Śābar Mōcī, 18th century) was one of the great poets who followed the erotic trend. The details of his life are not available, but he is known to be a contemporary of Shah 'Abdul Latif. He came from the village of Garhi Yasin in Sakhar district of Sindh but some critics say that he was born and brought up in Shikarpur.

Even the moon blushes seeing the face of my beloved,  
The bun of her hair is bigger than the hood of a cobra,  
Her gait defeats the grace of the feline walk,  
Says Mochi, fallen in love am I with such a beautiful beloved.

*IV*

Laung (Laung, 18th century), like his senior contemporary Kumbhar, followed the erotic trend and has left behind quite a number of erotic poems, although no biographical details are known.

Her voluptuous pomegranate-like breasts fascinate irresistibly,  
And over them dance the cobras of her hair,  
Her black, musk-fragrant, hair became the lamp's rival,  
Spread far the flashes of lightning her smiling lips,  
Sun, moon and stars are nothing compared to her radiant face,  
Says Laung, twisting her waist while looking defies she the  
beauty of lioness' waist.

## V

Vasand (18th century) was also one of the followers of the erotic trend of poetry, but the details of his life are not available. Maybe, he was a senior contemporary of Jalal Khatī. A large number of his poems are however extant.

The form of her eyebrows was different from the rainbow  
 that rose in the skies,  
 Her pearl - like teeth were too precious to be weighed in gold,  
 Her face was four times more beautiful than the moon,  
 Says Vasand, as if God Himself had chiselled her to bring out her beauty.

From *Singar Shairi*, c. 18th century

Tr. by Param Abichandani

### Seventeen poems

#### SACHAL SARMAST

SACHAL SARMAST (Sachal Sarmast, 1739-1829), the rebellious Sufi poet, was born at Daraz in North Sindh. His full name was 'Abdul Wahab, Sachal or Sachu (Man of truth) being his poetic name, while Sarmast (Intoxicated) was added to his poetic name as he often remained in a state of divine ecstasy. His entire poetry betrays his rebellion against the religious bigots and fanatics. He has used seven languages, viz. Sindhi, Hindi, Urdu, Saraiki, Persian, Arabic and Punjabi, as vehicles of his expression. He was the first poet who introduced the form of *Ghazal* into Sindhi poetry. His style is simple and the language colloquial and easily understandable by the laity. His *Kafis* (form of Sindhi poetry) are very popular among the Sindhis. The specimens of his poetry given here have been selected from *Risalo Sachal Sarmast* (1952).

## 1

You are the monarch of Beauty, I am your slave,  
 O beautiful One, I long for you all the time.

Forsake not those that are always yours,  
 My duty is to submit my salutations to you.

Night and day, my heart was in melancholy,  
 Until, O sweet one, my preceptor conveyed your message to me:

"Pine not, remove from your heart all sorrow and grief,  
 You are with us from eternity to eternity.

Annihilate all pain, cherish this solace.  
 Know for certain that here and there I am your Guide,

You are Ours and We are yours,  
Your appeal is all accepted."

2

The lover blooms like a lovely lotus,  
His glimpse is a wondrous wonder, his colour a mysterious red flower.

If you see the eye of a Lover, it's immaculate like glass and chinaware,  
A flowery tile stands no comparison with a chinaware,  
although it be multi-coloured.

Where there is this watery flower, the Beloved's mystery is there,  
How can the Lover restrain himself from enjoying His glimpse,  
for he is like an ever-thirsty moth,

In human form vibrates breath, without breath the form is worthless.  
If there is flavour of pain in breath, it is marvellously fine,

The dominance of Devil prevails in every soul,  
Life means goodness, else it's the lowest bottom of hell,

For Sachal the memory of friends alone is true,  
Those who forget love are made of futile clay.

3

You are present everywhere, lift your veil  
Sometimes you are a *Kazi*<sup>1</sup> and sendest mansoor to the gallows,  
You did work in the garb of the *Mullas*<sup>2</sup>,  
Who gave orthodox verdict against Mansoor.

4

The Beloved appears in every form,  
Sometimes He is *Mulla*, sometimes *Mufti*<sup>3</sup>,  
And sometimes He utters *Anal Huqq*<sup>4</sup>

Tr. by K.B. Advani

1. Magistrate.
2. Muslim priest.
3. A law-giver
4. I am God

## 5

A lover if you desire to be, let showers of love drench you entire,  
 Think not of self, if you do, enter then not these realms,  
 Annihilate yourself, this place is not to boast about,  
 Trust me, O friend, Of those devoid of sense is this pursuit,  
 Tears of blood you have to shed, day and night, for the Beloved,  
 Struck this bargain shall not be without sacrificing your head,  
 Achieved I nothing, in vain the life entire passed,  
 It beloves you not, O friend, to be so heedless,  
 Precious moment this is, if it passes away, remorseful you will be,  
 If it is gone once, no amount of penitence will bring it back.

## 6

O beautiful One, be pleased may You,  
 What pleases you, we shall certainly do,  
 Smearing ashes on our bodies, ascetics we shall become,  
 And like hermits shall we wander about,  
 If, with these our austerities, you be pleased,  
 Naked *Jogis* we shall be, wearing only a brief lion cloth,  
 Intoxicating cup of wine we shall drink,  
 If only in your shelter You take us.  
 We shall be jugglers, dancing on the rope,  
 If by some such devices we win you over.  
 Dance in public we shall, and play on drums and flutes,  
 If you be reconciled with this artifice.  
 Sachu can devise a thousand such means,  
 Of this your dog may you think some day,  
 Your lover am I, Your lover am I.

## 7

Divine knowledge is revealed only to lovers,  
 Know nothing, these *Mullas* and *Kazis* of this knowledge.

## 8

In a public square the wine I drink,  
 Care not I for a *Mulla* or a *Kazi*  
 By the Beloved's blandishment inebriated am I,  
 The fasts I remember not, forgotten the prayers have I.

## 9

Let me tell you the truth, O Kazi, abandon the legal questions,  
 Be not a *Mulla*, come, let's drink together a sip,  
 Sachal, who have gone astray on this path, God they shall never realize,  
 Mulla, books you keep aside, drink a cup of wine,  
 Self-oblivious you will be, Mulla, in a moment,  
 O *Akhund*<sup>1</sup>, see if you the ringlets of the fair one,  
 Beaten you will be with shoes, but spiritually delighted you will be.

## 10

Hear, O *Kazi* the refuting argument of love,  
 You have the knowledge, but love we have,  
 How then can you be reconciled with us?

## 11

*Yogi* I am, and a *Yogi* I shall remain, a mighty *Yogi*,  
 Neither a *Mulla* nor a Brahmin am I, I recite not the verses of the *Qur'an*.  
 I recite not the *Pothis*<sup>2</sup> and *Pouris*<sup>3</sup> nor the *Gita* do I read,  
 Neither East nor West I belong to, neither earth nor heaven.

## 12

He who was non-manifest became manifest,  
 The one who in the beginning was manifest, became non-manifest,  
 When the non-manifest merges in the manifest,  
 He becomes manifest,  
 Shall you know that Manifest only when you become non-manifest.

## 13

Never say "I" those who die before death,  
 Just the same for these faqirs are the foes and friends,  
 In the dale of "Unity" breathe these wise ones,  
 Forget they "I" and "You", and they behold "Self",  
 For them is one, be he a preceptor or a disciple,  
 Within they peep and comprehend Him and His image as one.

*Tr.* by Param Abichandani

1. A Muslim teacher.

2 & 3 Hindu scriptures.



14

Abandon the dualistic servitude, come back to Unity.  
Forget the bonds of flesh so that you are Pristine Purity yourself.

15

We became neither Sheikhs, nor *Makhdums*<sup>1</sup>, neither *Kazis* nor *Maulvis*,  
Devising no such hypocritical callings and creeds,  
We learnt only the art of God's love.

16

It is the religious that have misled people in the country,  
The Sheikhdoms and Pirdoms have awfully misguided them,  
Some people bend in mosques and other bow in temples  
But those pseudo-wise people don't come close to love.

17

I feel sad: what really I am, and what I have become,  
I know not why I have become servant, else I am truly the Master.

*Risalo Sachal Sarmast*, 18th-19th century

Tr. by Motilal Jotwani

## Eighty Verses

### CHAINRAI BACHOMAL LUND "SAMI"

CHAINRAI BACHOMAL LUND "SAMI" (Chainrāi Bacōmal Lund "Sāmī" 1743-1850) was a vedantic poet who depicted the wisdom of Vedas in his shlokas or verses in the Sindhi bayt form. Unlaboured and effortless, the language of Sami's shlokas in their vocabulary and phonological and grammatical structure, is related to Sanskrit and Prakrit. His vocabulary abounds in Sanskrit tatsama, ardha tatsama and tadbhava words. Through his images, Sami objectifies his emotions and achieves shanta rasa or the tranquil mood. His poetry interprets the Vedantic thought in Sindhi. He sings of the union of the many with the Supreme One.

1

The sightless see not Him;  
Deluded by illusion, the stupid go astray;

They, who are awake, perceive Him;  
Rapt in the Divine, their duality they slay.

2

One spirit fills the Vedas, Puranas and Quran,  
Says Sami, discern this in your mind firmly;  
As ether prevails in clouds, so His spirit doth everywhere dawn,  
Rarely some illuminated one kens this homily.

3

Within you dwells your Deity Divine;  
Undisguised, He listens and His speech doth share;  
They, who dive within their self's shrine,  
Are of this secret aware.

4

O Sami, all beauty is of the Beloved born!  
Himself sees, Himself hears, utters all by Himself!  
He who was formless and forlorn,  
By His creation became manifest.

5

The Perfect One in elephant and ant does pervade;  
Bereft of Atman, we found no spot;  
When Sami's eyes His face beheld,  
Fragments became his humble heart.

6

Rarely a seeker sees the unmanifest in the manifest,  
To whom the Master applies the antimony of Knowledge;  
O Sami, he dwells in the self's bliss perfect,  
Removing all fetters of desire's bondage.

7

All creatures dwell in the Creator,  
And He pervades the entire universe;  
Says Sami, this is known to a rare appraiser  
On whom the Beloved's mercy showers.

## 8

Having the beauteous face of the Beloved beheld,  
I bid goodbye to life and death, misery and joy;  
Tranquillity has my being attained.  
Lo, celestial repose does Sami enjoy.

## 9

How blights himself the witless fool,  
Falsely attached and lured by illusion,  
What priceless pearls she hurls in the marshy pool,  
Alas, O Sami, he is blind to the Divine Vision.

## 10

The fool perishes in the ego's vortex,  
Entangled like an ape's hand filled in greed;  
He awakens not to draw the veil of darkness;  
When the Master wills, Sami is from misery freed.

## 11

The unwise eschews not deceit, fraud and lies;  
He drowns his life in illusion's whirlpool;  
Planting spurge, for reaping mangoes he sighs;  
Why part with pearls for glittering glass, O fool?

## 12

The whole world in ignorance's bout does spin,  
Freed from cravings, the Yogi awakens within;  
Beholding the One Atman, O Sami, out and in  
Ever sip the elixir of boundless Heaven.

## 13

Comprehend Him who is beyond comprehension;  
Contemplate Him, O Sami, with a yearning mind;  
Break the bonds of dark superstition,  
Then shall you the Beloved's footprints find.

14

They, who the transience of pleasure realize,  
Are relieved from the dark sin of egoism;  
Achieving fathomless state, the wise  
Dwell in the dale of delight within.

15

Millions are misled, in ignorance they breed;  
Shaving off their heads, O Sami, the indiscreet  
display to the world their greed;  
The axe of mad desire they strike at their feet.

16

The whole world whirls in the wheel of desire,  
Like illusory dealings that in the dreams you find;  
Understand, O Sami, discrimination acquire  
To kill the pride of ignorance in your mind.

17

Deluded in superstition the self does seem,  
Losing the jewel of the self within its maze;  
Says Sami, he takes many a birth in dream,  
But awakes not beyond the horizon to gaze.

18

The fool bemoans in illusory quest;  
Deluded by unreality, in agony he sighs;  
Heedless of death's shadow overhead  
Painfully he dies, with tears of blood in his eyes,

19

Run not after shadows, but real rapture seek;  
Knowing the world's transience, enter the eternal world's abode;  
Divulge not this to anyone, but the secret keep  
Of this mystic wonder-code.

## 20

Away from this earth all marched out;  
Pirs and prophets who propounded their faith;  
All make exit; the worldly wise and devout.  
What, then, "yourself" you think?

## 21

The mind spins its web of illusion;  
The unreal seems real, by desires raved;  
Day and night, it dances in delusion;  
Sami, merged in self, from calamity is saved.

## 22

The aspirants drink God's glory in holy communion;  
The mystics sing of union's melodies diverse;  
Listening and discoursing, they serve everyone;  
And fixed in a divine state, they remain equanimous.

## 23

He who knows his being's might,  
In divine fellowship moulds his self;  
Viewing this world through filtered sight,  
Awake, O Sami, and know your "self."

## 24

This mortal garb is a rare jewel,  
But the fool casts it in muddy mire;  
Drinking poison with zest, he casts the nectar in well,  
Alas! he looks not within to detect the divine fire.

## 25

The past is dead, heed the present conduct yours,  
Your Beloved's sight, O Sami, to gain  
In the heart's inmost shrine;  
This gift of mortal garb you shall not get again.

26

Who by life and deeds does his faith declare,  
Looks within, that sage compassionate;  
Equipoised by introspection, he finds way through every hair;  
And mounting the mystic wheel he achieves celestial state.

27

The man of faith is balanced between void and habitation,  
Where exit neither, "You" nor "I", sire nor slave;  
O Sami, he dwells in spirit's spotless heaven;  
Attaining desireless state, he does not rave.

28

All scriptures are shelved by the man of faith;  
Of their esoteric meaning he hath full perception;  
On Nirvana's white steed, five evils he slays;  
Ceaselessly he builds a fence around his Atman.

29

The man of faith in oneness looms  
Where neither "You" nor "I", fear nor noise are;  
There without pattern, hue, leaf or root, the mystic flower blooms,  
And the splendour of suns and moons does shine afar.

30

I remember them who the Beloved seek;  
By the Guru's grace have I beheld the beloved mine.  
Him I offer my mind and body meek;  
Such is the path of faith from immemorial time.

31

The man of faith lisps the lesson of love;  
He attains Truth merged in its prime;  
Ever does he soar in the heights above,  
Enjoying unperturbed the rapture of Vision sublime.

## 32

Ever by His devotee dwells the Loved One.  
 He forsakes none, like the sight in the eyes!  
 Having destroyed all pain and illusion  
 Sami with the Atman wistfully vies.

## 33

Unity in duality the Masters reveal to everyone,  
 But one in a million discerns it indeed.  
 Rapt in divinè love, without delusion,  
 He kens his life to be realization's field.

## 34

On whom the beloved bestows His benediction,  
 O Sami, all his desires are fulfilled.  
 He crosses the ocean of illusion,  
 And the Beloved's face ever in his eyes is filled.

## 35

He who follows the generous Guru's Code,  
 O Sami, that seeker's quest does end;  
 He can guide others to the supreme abode,  
 And never does he in the abyss of mortal womb descend.

## 36

Through his guidance, I sought within the Atman;  
 His mercy has rained, all sluice gates opened wide;  
 Beholding the light between the eyebrows burn,  
 Sami killed pride and in spirit did abide!

## 37

He who through his guidance lifts ignorance's veil;  
 O Sami, the light Eternal shines in his cave;  
 He dances in delight as he beholds the Beloved hail,  
 And swims across the deep, heedless of any tidal wave.

38

The sun of doctrine rose in Beatitude's heaven,  
All ignorance vanished and darkness was dispelled;  
Doubts were dissolved evaporating all pain;  
Lo! Sami has the omniscient Beloved beheld.

39

Give up anger to escape infliction of affliction;  
Seek the Beloved's door, destroying mind's duality;  
Spontaneously, then, shall the Immortal One  
Meet you in His magnimity.

40

The Master bestowed transparency to the heart,  
And in my eyes He let an endless splendour leap;  
All sense of duality from the mind did depart;  
Lo! the drop has merged in the ocean deep.

41

None, without purity, the pure state attains,  
O Sāmi, rarely a seeker this discerns,  
Who hears the symphony of oneness and in heaven remains,  
Detached from the world, all attachment he burns.

42

The immaculate adept made my heart's mirror clean;  
Dissolved through devotion is the desire's impurity;  
Sami is soothed by the sight of the Supreme;  
The drop enters the ocean devoid of duality.

43

Neither red nor black is the mind's chamber wrought;  
It is parentless and without native place,  
It traverses the three worlds with the speed of thought;  
Sometimes it is happy abegging; at others, it weeps even in a palace.



44

Everyone dances in ego's maddening mansion,  
 And bakes without fuel in the mind's furnace,  
 One in a million is saved from this dragon,  
 Behold, the spirit's splendour shines over his face.

45

Ruined by ego are sages, contemplators and worldly men;  
 Straying from right path, they slide back their feet;  
 Slain by illusion ever are the insane;  
 Alas for the fools who turn back from the Beloved sweet!

46

Ignorance fulfils the non-existent phenomenon;  
 Even its own are regarded aliens by the ego;  
 He deems to be real this image of illusion;  
 Sami awakes not to discern the shadow.

47

In fever of desires the mind burns hot;  
 He is calm who kens in all the One Absolute;  
 Accept not finite as infinite, deluded in thought;  
 O Sami, can any filth the spirit's waters pollute?

48

They conquer the world, who cast off pride;  
 Such ones soothe others with spotless devotion;  
 O Sami, within such heart does abide  
 The presence of the Loved one!

49

Cast off pride and learn to discriminate;  
 Lose yourself in the service of the lowly;  
 Discarding duality, on His holy feet contemplate;  
 Reconcile the Beloved, lest His grace turn from you.

50

The lover treads the earth without arrogance;  
Freed from pride and greed is the self-controlled one;  
O Sami, he divulges to none, not even once,  
His yearning for the Loved one.

51

Countless fools, deluded by ego, fall prey  
To it, regarding the world indestructible to be !  
Behold them, O Sami, scorching under death's ray  
And render Karmic accounts repeatedly.

52

Crush you conceit, lest it ensnare you.  
To them, whom we belong, turn your face,  
And share your heart's love freely  
With them, who are wedded to nothingness.

53

The holy ones obey the edicts of the Loved One.  
Casting off ego from within their mind,  
They discover divine wisdom within their Atman,  
Accepted by the eternal they themselves find.

54

Blasphemed by ego are all, sanyasin and householder,  
Who regard right as wrong, dealing in delusion;  
They awake not to behold the omnipresent Creator,  
O Sami, woe betide them who are devoid of wisdom.

55

None has fathomed the mystery of Infinite Being'  
Many mathematicians have failed to measure Him,  
Seldom does a seeker glimpse the All-Seeing.  
Sami is calm, having wiped all ego's sin.

56

The false and conceited do not ponder on Truth,  
 Endlessly revolving in births and deaths,  
 Some wakeful valiant beholds Him in sooth,  
 Who , O Sami, his five enemies dominates.

57

Having perceived Truth, why need they lie?  
 Such ones behold the Beloved in all the men;  
 United to Him, His bliss they enjoy;  
 Detached like a lotus, they perpetually reign.

58

Who, divorcing duality, with Truth does wed,  
 Self-controlled is such a one, day and night;  
 Moving in the world with all desires dead,  
 He hides the secret of his inner delight.

59

Rarely in Truth a trader deals,  
 Using the measurement of love and forbearance;  
 Conversant with both the worlds such a one feels;  
 Suppliant is he before the exalted ones!

60

They discern Truth who by longing are rent;  
 The self, within self, through humility behold;  
 How can the fools, O Sami, comprehend  
 The wounded one's woes and misery untold?

61

The Master in His mercy kind  
 Handed me the cup of Reality's wine;  
 Vanity vanished instantly from the mind  
 After sudden onset of intoxication divine.

62

The Master applying Truth's touchstone  
Uprooted spurious weeds of duality;  
No more shall Sami be henceforth borne  
Back in the coils of mortality.

63

Six shastras, eight Puranas and four Vedas the same Truth proclaim;  
Why wander like maniacs from place to place?  
Seek divine communion, igniting eternal flame,  
And behold Him even in the market place.

64

Everyone "talks" about the unfathomable state,  
But one in a million does ecstasy attain.  
Who in righteous conduct, O Sami, is set  
By practising faith, self-effacement does he gain.

65

Peace is not attained by uttering Rama's name,  
Hunger is not overcome by talking of food in vain;  
The goal is not reached without moving towards the same;  
Abide by holy doctrine, ceaseless happiness to attain.

66

Their longing for the Loved One lessens not  
Who taste the saltless savour of equanimity;  
Destroying all the cravings of thought,  
Sami attains the Infinite and enjoys tranquillity!

67

None attains the Divine without intense longing;  
Milk unless curdled, gives not butter;  
No tree bears fruit without blossoming,  
So does Sami utter.

68

Delay not, your longing chokes my heart.  
 When shall You shower grace on the dying one?  
 Pining in separation, this life shall depart.  
 Asks Sami; Will you then meet the aspiring one?

69

Love maddens lovers and plunges them in the deep ocean;  
 Torn, O Sami, is the veil off their sight;  
 They fix their gaze on the face of the Loved one;  
 Behold! He hands them the crystal cup of light.

70

Who listens to Love's call, devoid of duality's deceit,  
 The flower of devotion blooms in his heart;  
 Merged in Heaven and freed from ego's conceit,  
 Never does Sami deem the Beloved to be apart.

71

May some Pundit be pleased to unfold  
 The Love's scroll that unfolds Atman;  
 On Bhakti's boat may He make me board.  
 Tearing adroitly the veil of illusion.

72

The lovers, not *Nagas*, the Beloved to themselves draw ;  
 The monasteries of ascetics are deluged with rain;  
 Few keep vigil for days on end; yet ah!  
 Some, in a moment, the glorious gain.

73

The lovers move and act, by desires unbound,  
 Lured not by Maya, nor claimed by death;  
 They talk and listen to the cosmic sound,  
 Beholding the Atman closer than breath.

74

The lovers ponder not over the shallow or deep,  
Plunging headlong, they cross the ocean;  
The isle of enchantment they instantly reach,  
Joining both pairs of eyes, the two become one.

75

How may I describe the state of wounded hearts!  
The bleeding victims, alas! are tongue-tied;  
And reddened by the tips of the Beloved's darts,  
Death licks them not, who before death have died.

76

Free from doubts is the true sanyasin,  
He beholds within his self's vision.  
Shiva and Shakti's dual manifestation;  
All other means lead unto delusion.

77

His mind's ego the sanyasin eradicates;  
Revealed is the lofty state to such a one;  
All his pious practices he dedicates  
Unto ineffable bliss of the Atman.

78

One in a million is a true Momin and Muslim  
Who merges in oneness, devoid of duality's delusion,  
Who saunters within the light-suffused mansion,  
The world acknowledges him as God's good man.

79

Who, churning his mind, spirits' butter extracts,  
Melted in Divinity's vision is his consciousness;  
The state of his bliss ever attracts Sami  
Unto the Atman's infinite awareness.

80

The bliss of Atman the greatest to be is said,  
 Never, O Sami, does its intoxication terminate;  
 Ask this of them whose attachment is dead,  
 Whose devotion does reveal the realm infinite!

*Shlokas*, 18th-19th century

Tr. by Shanti Shahani

## Fifteen Verses

ROHAL FAQIR

ROHAL FAQIR (Rōhal Fakīr; 1726-1805), a saint-poet and mystic, exponent of Indian philosophy, Shia Muslim by religion and a Sufi by practice, was considered a great saint-poet Kabir reborn in Sindh. He has written poetry in Sindhi, Hindi and Saraiki. His four shastras, *Mana Prabodh*, *Adha-budh Granth*, *Sarb Jnan* and *Agam Varta*, all in Hindi, penned by a Muslim saint, are a unique feat. He is an exponent of Vedanta and also the author of *Krishna Padas*, *Artis*, *Holis*, etc. The selections given here are from his work compiled in *Kandri-a Varani Jo Kalam* (Poetry of Kandri Faqirs, 1964).

1

If you know yourself, you have in you an invaluable jewel,  
 Scrape out from your heart the element of evil well,  
 It's the ignorant who search the Beloved far away,  
 Day and night, says Rohal, ever God in you does dwell.

2

If you are on the path of the Beloved, be relentless,  
 Search your mind for the right clue to find your Beloved,  
 Leave this false world, be immersed in Him instead.

3

To read and to comprehend are two things different,  
 The Beloved's face is on this side and the words are divergent,  
 Those who recognized Him, says Rohal, are to the night negligent.

4

In the name of Islam and blasphemy, their steps are faulty,  
 A Hindu and a Muslim, the third they brought in enmity,

The blind can't dispense with darkness, who will tell them the truth?  
Says Rohal, once we entered the path leading to the Beloved,  
We saw only one God; without difference or deceit,  
One who sleeps in God's K'aba, where will she place her feet?

5

I know not, nor do I remember, how suddenly stirred was my emotion,  
Says Rohal, His mention only puts my soul in motion,  
The moment I remembered Him, He entered my abode,  
My eyes saw the Beloved and stopped my tears of separation.

6

Believe me, I knew not that Someone lived in my home,  
In the brightness of love, the Beloved showed up all alone,  
Says Rohal, seeing Him thus, all my illusions were blown,  
He is ever with me, to this ignorant one is known,  
When I realize this again, closer to me than my eyes You are borne.

7

Says Rohal, You are in my soul, distance there is none,  
You cheer me as cheers the flowers the morning sun,  
Folks, what I say are not bayts, but are thoughts of oneness,  
Those who see with the eyes of love, see the Beloved in their embrace.

8

Those who are in love, care not they for thirst or hunger,  
They are happy in the union of oneness that will ever linger,  
Says Rohal, suffering keeps away from them  
who are merged in Him for ever.

9

For buying things why should you go to shop another,  
You have your own wealth, the trade is also yours  
Seach for something that may love harbinger,  
Longing will bring you knowledge, don't allow your love to wither.



## 10

Those in whose heart the separation and renunciation found their roots,  
 They scanned and found inside them the truth.  
 They drove away from their minds the fear of life and death,  
 Says Rohal, they, the humble Nagas<sup>1</sup>, realized Rama.

## 11

They merged themselves in Rama, the hermits realized Him for ever,  
 Everything they gave, in giving they hesitated never,  
 They drove away from their minds evil thoughts for ever,  
 Says Rohal, day and night, absorbed in Him they were,  
 Happy were all Nagas at the sight of their Friend.

## 12

The sanyasins who pilgrim inside themselves, go to Ganga never,  
 Their hearts pine and long for their Beloved ever,  
 These hermits searched and found the realms of God.  
 These devotees were immersed, says Rohal, in the Lord.  
 The charmers searched the deeps and there settled for ever.

## 13

They dare their heads with bow and gazed at Nasut<sup>2</sup>,  
 Says Rohal, all the time they enjoyed the Malkut<sup>3</sup>,  
 They understand the Beloved, the proficient ones in knowledge,  
 Jogis bore the hardships they reached the Lahut<sup>4</sup>,  
 Devotees, the extreme ascetics, the Nagas went and merged in Natha.

## 14

Leaving aside honour those who became Nagas without shame whatsoever,  
 They abandoned the Ganga and Girnar, these Samis for ever,  
 In discourses they indulge not, nor on harps do they play,  
 Says Rohal, immersed deep in His splendour the hermits lay.

---

1. A sect of ascetics.

2. First stage of a Sufi when he follows the edicts of *Shari'at*.

3. Second stage of Sufi when he acquires purity of mind.

4. The fourth stage supposed to be reached by Sufis when wholly absorbed in the Deity.

15

Reflection of the other "He" descended on the Jogis,  
The Ganga was not for them, nor Gomti, nor the thought of meditation.  
Neither talk nor anxiety, nor any call or its reverberation,  
Neither night nor day, neither victory nor defeat or desperation,  
Inside themselves they went and the Unfathomable they found,  
The hermits were deeply absorbed, says Rohal, in Him inside bound,  
Thy entered the realms of eternity and settled there safe and sound.

*Bayts*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Param Abichandani

## Selections

### BHAI DALPATRAI "DALPAT"

BHAI DALPATRAI "DALPAT" (Bhāi Dalpatrāi "Dalpat" 1769-1849), a saint-poet, was born at Sehvan, a centre of learning in Sindh. It is evident from his poetry that he had acquired proficiency in Sindhi, Hindi and Persian, and that he had good knowledge of Sufism and Vedanta. The main thought of Dalpat's poetry is a synthesis of Sufism and Advaita Vedanta. The selections given here have been taken from his work compiled in *Sindhi Shaira Jo Intikhabu* (Selections from Sindhi poetry, 1976).

1

## Poems

1

Neither was there a love affair, nor a pain of yearning,  
Remembrance of the Beloved set my breaths burning.  
The eyes lacerated my mind, tore me to bits their battering.  
Be not so, the Beloved remained away from my heart  
for a moment, I aver,  
Says Dalpat, let Him remain as He does for ever.

2

Walk in the spheres of love they all beware,  
They have to kill their mind with the weapons of truth, they are aware,  
In the fields the heads of lovers are separated from their bodies,  
Heads they dedicate to pain, seized with the desire for gallows,  
Many Mansoors were beheaded and so were many pain-loving fellows.

Spearing them and piercing them, love brought them to the fore,  
Says Dalpat, they saw the Beloved at that moment on the path.

## 3

Enter the cave in the space, O Naga, and for Natha look through,  
Ride the gallows of consciousness, heed the counsel of your Guru,  
Remember the word your tongue utters without moving in lieu,  
Destroy the palace of deception, O Jogi, in view,  
Irritate your mind so hard that it envisions your Beloved,  
See in your body the mystery of God that exists in its well,  
Control your heart, says Dalpat, and you get the jewel.

## 4

Sacrifice your head and have the vision of your Beloved,  
Give your heart to the Broker, if you want to trade,  
If you want to be accepted, present Him your head,  
Pine and bear pain, and have yourself annihilated,  
It's only then, says Dalpat, will the Beloved enter your path.

## 5

Waves roll inside, the Megha Malhar outside,  
Without the Beloved, says Dalpat, peace will not abide,  
With whom the Beloved is not, how will their eyes slide.

## 6

Jogis were lost in mid-path and found the place,  
Face to face with their Beloved they talk in the space;  
So close is He to their existence as fragrance to flower is in interlace,  
Says Dalpat, devoid of all turmoil they live in a place.

## 7

Jogi found a place where love exists limitless;  
He drifted away from his very existence to reach that place;  
There exists not any speech or anxiety, nor any turmoil reckless,  
Neither sky nor kings exist there nor the rich or the poor  
None takes to a begging bowl, nor does anyone get alms,  
Where no sound, says Dalpat, existed, there they finally slept.

8

The kiln has been ignited afresh by the Beloved,  
 For devotees a fire of separation has been lighted  
 Caring not for life, with intense love you enter it unblighted,  
 Drive away the pretence of mind with the yearning your body ignited,  
 Clean the dirt of your mind with the soap of truth,  
 Cleanse your insides as the washer does the garments,  
 Go, says Dalpat, and be present at the door of the Friend.

9

Close your eyes and see your self peeping inside,  
 Deep inside your self search for Him beside,  
 Know your Beloved, says Dalpat, keeping scold aside,  
 It's then, O Sami, you get your loving Beloved inside.

10

If you want to see your Beloved, furtive let your looks be,  
 Non-existent bubble on the water mankind is,  
 But splitting the difference in water, anything about it said  
 Slipped away in the process the one who sought the Beloved.  
 Where two can't co-exist, how can the third be?  
 If there is God in Pipra<sup>1</sup>, who then can in Babur<sup>2</sup> be?  
 If Islam descended from God, where did the blasphemy come from?  
 If Ka'aba is that of God, why not the Church that be?  
 In Matha, as in mosque, only one lamp burns free,  
 Why then, says Dalpat, is this turmoil amongst  
 human beings on the spree?

11

Why this enmity between the Turks and the Hindus boom?  
 If God exists in Pipra who then in the capers looms?  
 His presence is evident in the straws, and the leaf that blooms  
 The one-eyed and the blind never find the twists of  
 this world that truth exhumes.  
 It's the wise who discover, says Dalpat, the path of the Friend,

*Bayts*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Param Abichandani

1. & 2. Names of trees.

*II*

## Lyrics

*1*

Who shall I tell the saga of my poignancy,  
Intense love has made me shameless.

*2*

Love cared not for this innocent, grief-stricken one,  
I became a Jogi for my Beloved.

*3*

For reaching Kech, I shall journey through distant lands,  
I shall take suffering as companion and change it in entertainment,  
Wounding me deep, took away my heart my Beloved.

*4*

Stop me not, my friends, with none shall I live,  
With sneers and reproaches all I shall live,  
Please tell me the path that leads to my Beloved.

*5*

Had I known love brings so much pain.  
I would never have loved Him all in vain.  
Suffered I would have not remembering my Beloved.

*6*

The Beloved ignited the flame of separation inside me,  
He entered within me and to ashes he burnt me,  
Day and night, grills and torments me, my Beloved.

*7*

Separation left her utterly unaided,  
Sleepless nights turned her eyes sore unattended,  
To move about for her made difficult her Beloved.

8

In love with my Beloved I fell,  
Why was I born to suffer like hell,  
Now I burn in the fire of longing for my Beloved.

9

Says Dalpat, longing for seeing Him made her mad,  
She threw overboard shame and honour all she had,  
None else would understand her but her Beloved.

*Wais* 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Param Abichandani

# Medieval Tamil Literature

## Ramayana

### KAMPAN

KAMPAN (c. 9th-12th century) the Kavi Chakravarti, or "The emperor of poets" was born at Tiruvazhantur, a small village in Thanjavur District. He hailed from a family of temple priests and it is said he belonged to the Uvacha caste. He was the court-poet of a Chola king. There are innumerable anecdotes woven around his life and work. We understand that the relationship between the Chola monarch and the poet was always a strained one, although the king respected the poet and rewarded him. Kampan was patronized by Sataiyappa, a philanthropist of Vennainallur. So, the poet has praised him in his everlasting epic at the end of each thousand stanzas, as a humble token of his affection and gratitude.

The date of Kampan's *Ramayana* is uncertain, although one of the prefatory stanzas refers to Saka 807 (corresponding to 885 A.D.) as the year when the work was presented before the learned scholars and critics. While one school of thought fixes Kampan as a ninth-century poet on this basis, there is another view that internal evidence points to the 12th century as the period. This corresponds to the reign of Kulottunga Chola III, when prosperity prevailed and the Tamil people were proud of their valour following the Kalinga expedition.

Kampan's *Ramayana* is not a translation of Valmiki's epic. It is not even an adaptation but a transcreation. We find in his narrative a number of deviations from Valmiki. Even though he had borrowed the story from Valmiki he made it a completely new one by abridging or expanding or introducing certain new episodes into it. For example, he cut off some portions of Valmiki's work dealing with Rama's departure to the forest and made it more crisp and dramatic. He elaborated the account of Rama's marriage, which was very brief in Valmiki. Valmiki created Rama as a mere mortal. But in Kampan's hand he becomes God, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In Valmiki, Kumbhakarna, the brother of Ravana, is almost nothing more than a sleepy giant. In Kampan, he has been delineated as one who is duty-conscious and an exemplary character for brotherly affection and gratitude.

The treatment of the Ahalya episode is a remarkable one. In contrast with Valmiki, Kampan has created her as a chaste woman with brilliant qualities.

In the character of Ravana, Kampan has created an anti-hero who is a worthy foe to the mighty Rama. Valmiki's portrait of Ravana as an odd mixture of spiritual power and devilish arrogance is retained in Kampan's epic, but embellished by an accent on love and valour. Kampan has successfully employed similes, metaphors, images and ideas borrowed from his predecessors. He has drunk deep in the founts of Tirukkural, chintamani and the hymns of Alwar. Following in the footsteps of the earlier poets he has absolute command over the art of versification.

Kampan's poetic calibre is unequalled. His descriptions are of unique poetic power. His dramatic skill in retrieving the situation is of a rare quality. He seems to be an adept in handling the metres with varieties of accent and assonance. Every character in his epic has a personality of his or her own. He puts familiar words to new use and freely employs Sanskrit words, where necessary. The Tamil language may be said to have found its full strength and stature in Kampan's poetry.

Eight excerpts are given below: the first from *Balakandam*, the second from *Ayodhyakandam*, the third and the fourth from *Kishkindhakandam*, the fifth and the sixth from *Sundarakandam*, and the seventh and eighth from *Yuddhakandam*

1

### Ahalya

They reached the river Sone, a lovely damsel  
 Her sand-dune breasts decked with  
 well-washed gems,  
 Sandal and akil brought down from the hills,  
 Her waist the tender winding *vanji* creeper,  
 Fresh flowers humming with bees her tinkling waistlet,  
 Black sand her tresses, hill-encircling channels  
 Her anklets jingling with bells.  
 When they reached the river, the sun  
 That he might be cool the next morning  
 Plunged his burning self in the sea  
 With his horses and chariot  
 Which outran the eyes of Aruna<sup>1</sup>.

1 The Sun's charioteer.



They reached a sweet-smelling grove  
 Where bees with their wives had sought refuge  
 Shut out from their cool almshouses  
 By the lotuses which closed their petals.

Dispelling the dark which resembled Death's hue  
 The sun rose out of the blue sea  
 Like Brahma on the full-bown lotus  
 Springing from Vishnu's jewelled navel.

The three resembling the triune gods  
 Rose up and saw the great Ganga  
 So like that river carrying gold<sup>1</sup>  
 With the konrai from the Bull-rider's<sup>2</sup> locks.

By and by they reached Videha  
 Where storks half-awake in the lotus ponds  
 Mistake for kayal<sup>3</sup> the reflections  
 In the water of the lovely eyes  
 Bright and beguiling of the farm girls,  
 Stick them with their beaks and draw back abashed !

Peacocks danced in the groves of that land  
 To the drums of sluices from its tanks  
 The lights lit by the *ashoka* flowers  
 And the sweet music of the bees  
 Played on the strings of dripping honey !

The blue lilies weeded out of its fields  
 And thrown on the red lotuses around  
 Were like the eyes of enticing women  
 Drawing the gaze of the farmers at work  
 To the disgust of their wives come to fetch them !

Maidens bathing in its pools  
 Spread confusion 'mid its swans  
 Which mistook them for themselves  
 So lovely was their gait.  
 Their saffron leaving an imprint fast  
 On some of these birds and not others,

1. The Kaveri carrying the yellow *komai* flower.
2. Shiva.
3. The carp fish

The unstained ones were more confused and acted coy—  
When night came, the lotuses slept

But not the birds!

Milk streaming from buffaloes' udders,  
Juice from the riverbank mango trees  
Or from sugarcanes crushed in the mills,  
And fragrant honey from the combs  
Gave little chance for other rivers !

The fish in its rivers were so many  
That they would leap and take refuge  
In the flower-sheaths of the palms

Planted on their banks

When the big buffalo calves  
Disturbed the waters, being frightened  
By the noise the drummers made

Beating on their drums

To which danced girls, liquid-eyed,  
Their waists thinner than cotton threads  
Bent under the burden which they bore  
Of breasts which jutted like hills.

Soft-limbed women plunged into its tanks  
Their sword-eyes sheathed in their lids;  
And, their white bangles jingling like birds,  
Rose from the waters like Lakshmi that day

When the milky ocean was churned—

And the bees plunged into flowers.

Walking thus pleasantly in this land

They reached Mithila's beflagged fortress

And saw in its outskirts an upright stone,

A sage's wife brought low through betrayal.

When the dust from Rama's feet fell on that stone

She stood again in her former shape, as one

Reaching the feet of God delusion-free,

Attains his real self—and the sage said:

"Prince, whose forebears brought Ganga from the sky,  
That joyous lightning which stands shy aside,  
Is Ahalya, the wife of the great sage  
Who gave the sinner Indra a thousand eyes."

Hearing this from the sage with the ruddy locks,  
 Alas! alas! what sort of world is this,"  
 Exclaimed the Prince, "Was it fate or accident  
 Which caused such havoc to one so venerable?"

Replied to Rama the sagacious soul:  
 "Listen, Fortune's child, in days gone by  
 The God of Thunder once, the sage away,  
 Saw his deer-eyed wife and was enthralled.  
 "Pierced by that lance her eyes, and Madan's shafts.  
 He sought a sure remedy in her arms.  
 His senses lost, he tricked the sage away,  
 And in his guileless guise entered his hut.

"And she by his ingress inebriate  
 Felt a new love, and knew him who he was,  
 And yet would not desist—so low she sank  
 While her high husband, a second Shiva, hied home.

"An arrow could be stopped, but not his curse  
 Or blessing. She knew it and trembling stood—  
 A figure now of everlasting shame—  
 While the rattled god in a cat's guise tried to flee !

"Fire darting from his eyes at what had passed,  
 His words blazed forth like one of your own shafts:  
 'A thousand *pudenda* shall cover you', he said,  
 And Indra on the instant was so covered !  
 "Covered with boundless shame, a laughing- stock  
 To all the world, guilt-laden Indra left;  
 And turning to his soft-limbed wife, the sage—  
 'A harlot, thou shalt harden into stone !'

"The great", she said, 'as ordained must forgive,  
 O fiery sage, vouchsafe an end to my curse;  
 'When the dust from the foot of flower-decked Rama falls  
 On thee, thou shalt emerge from out that stone !

"Thus wise the past, and now for all the world  
 Not sorrow's but salvation's path you have blazed;  
 That fight between dark demon and raincloud  
 Showed your arm's prowess there, here seen your foot's."

1. These were later turned to eyes on the pleadings of the other gods.

Absorbing all that the sage narrated  
 Rama, giver of this help, said,  
 "Seek, Mother, that great sage's mercy.  
 Don't grieve," and bowed to her golden feet.  
 When that great sage astonished saw  
 These visitors to his hermitage,  
 He welcomed them kindly and did all the honours  
 Whereupon Gadi's Son<sup>1</sup> told him:

"The dust of his feet had but to touch her  
 And your slim-waisted wife regained her form;  
 In her heart she is guiltless, take her back, "  
 And that Brahma-like sage took in those words.

That Prince, as virtuous as he was great,  
 Bowed to Gotama, went round him  
 And gave that lady now without spot  
 Into his hand; and leaving that grove  
 With that other sage, saw a fort gem-decked.

2

The Ganga Sighted

The passage below is a description of River Ganga from *Ayodhyakandam*.

The ankleted hero with his peerless army  
 Left Kosala resembling the Kaveri land<sup>2</sup>  
 And pitied by all things fleeting and stationary  
 Reached at least the river Ganga.

Because of the flood of elephant must  
 Which flowed into that river Ganga  
 It became unfit for any but bees  
 Either to drink or for a bath !

I cannot swear that I saw  
 The dust from their hooves stained god's heads  
 But I saw nothing but heaps of horses  
 Heaving, drinking, swimming in the river  
 And rolling in the dust of the banks.

1. Vishvamitra

2. The kingdom of Ayodhya, according to Kampan was as fertile as the Kaveri delta, noted for being the granary of the south.

That river with its milky water  
 Never reached the roaring sea  
 Because the sea of the Emperor's army  
 Reached and swallowed up the river !

The army which followed Bharata  
 Looking for the hero who had gone to the forest  
 Totalled in all, according to the experts  
 Sixty thousand *akshauhinis*<sup>1</sup>.

When that army reached the Ganga,  
 "This host," thought Guha in his fury,  
 "Must have come to wage a war  
 With him who resembles the sea and the rain-cloud."

Strong like Death, he guessed from its dust  
 The strength of the army that had come;  
 Laughing with derision, eyes darting fire,  
 Smoke from his nostrils, brows and bow bent;

With five hundred thousand men  
 Each like Death armed with a trident  
 Ready to execute all criminals,  
 Expert in bowmanship,

A dagger in his belt, biting his lips,  
 Blunt of speech, fiery-eyed,  
 With a tabor and a long horn  
 Shoulders burgeoning at the thought of war,

"An army of rats for me a snake."  
 Said he and hailed with joy his host  
 As if all the tigers in the world  
 With their sharp nails were to fall in line.

He reached the nearby southern bank  
 Surrounded by his noisy army,  
 As if portending the end of the *yugas*  
 Huge clouds thundered and a black sea churned up.

1. An *akshauhini* consisted of 21,870 elephants; 21,870 chariots; 65,610 horses; and 1,09,350 men making a total of 2,18,700.

**“Surrounded by elephants, horses, an army  
What can his strength do till the Ganga is crossed ?  
O stern hunters, won't you remove all the boats ?  
Won't it be good if we die first, ere Rama ?**

"Let this army be mere peanuts to our heroes!  
Even against gods my bow like a cloud  
Will shower arrows, pluck their hearts out,  
Our arms annihilate their army and elephants.

SC 11

"Will not my arrows destroy his army  
Whose mother gave my friend that day  
A bark to wear, and its heap of corpses  
Carried by the Ganga fill the sea ?

"Will you not attain the renown of hunters  
Defeating an army marching with banners,  
And restoring the land to its righteous ruler ?  
Can you not see how this man whom my lord  
Endowed with his land is loth to let him  
Enjoy even the forest which is ours ?

"If unmindful that the friend of the sages  
Now in the forest will be annoyed with me,  
I enter the field and shoot my arrows,  
Won't even an army like the seven seas  
Be all finished like grass stalks by a cow ?"

The great Bowman with a wrestler's shoulders,  
The friend of Rama, said these words  
To his men of iron mould,  
And Sumantra, the veteran charman  
Saw him stand, and approaching Bharata,  
Who stood like a lion, told him this:

"This is Guha the owner of both banks of the Ganga  
And the countless numbers of boats;  
A bosom friend of your clan's chief,  
High-shouldered, strong as a tusker;  
A Bowman with a sea of an army.  
With a garland cool and dripping with honey

"O Prince, strong and blue like the raincloud,  
His strength is a rock, his love a sea;  
Beautiful as the night he stands  
Right before you, perhaps eager to see you."

When his father's friend said this to him  
Bharata the pure of heart

Said, "If he is so dear to Rama  
Before he comes I shall go and see him."

Saying which he arose — and his brother and his love,  
All three, like a hill. And across the cool river  
The hunter king looked at him and saw  
The state of his body, and was astounded.

A bark-clad figure covered with dust,  
A face unsmiling like a rayless moon,  
A sorrow that would melt even a stone—  
He saw transfixed, and his bow slid down.

"He resembles my chief," he thought, "and that other  
Is like his brother; his garb an ascetic's.  
His grief seems endless, his bows perpetual—  
Can a brother of my liege be guilty of sin ?

"A great sorrow seems to be his,  
And a love undying. Dressed too like a hermit.  
I will find out all and come back.  
Guard the ways," he said and left  
In a boat all by himself.

He came and fell at Bharata's feet;  
And Bharata whom Brahma could worship  
Fell at Guha's feet—and Guha  
Happier than any father could be  
Raised and embraced the one whose fame  
All worthy hearts and heads will cherish.

Embracing him Guha asked,  
"O doughty prince, what brings you here?"  
And Bharata replied, "I have come  
To set aright the strange things done  
By my father, and take Rama back".

The hunter kind, so pure of heart,  
Hearing those words heaved a deep sigh  
And joy upsurging fell on the ground  
A second time, locked with his hands  
The prince's lotus feet, and said:



"The kingdom your mother got for you  
And your father gave, you have spurned as sin.  
O pensive face, prince past all praise,  
Can a thousand Ramas equal you?"

"O prince, as virtuous as mighty,  
What praise can a poor hunter give?  
As the sun with his rays bedims all lights  
You have by your action put in the shade  
The fame of all your ancestors,  
Gathering and making it all your own!"

Many such fit and proper things  
Did that hunter, the heroic spearman, say  
To Bharata in his boundless love.  
What wonder if Bharata evoked such love?  
Didn't Rama too by his marvellous virtues?

That ocean of grace and innate virtues  
Bharata, bowing to south,  
Asked him, "Where did our brother stay?"  
And the hunter king said, "Get up, prince,  
I will myself show you the way."

Fleeting like a cloud he saw  
The bed of grass among those rocks  
On which the bowman must have rested;  
Then, plunged in a sea of sorrow, fell down  
And bathed that place clean with his tears.

"You knew you had to suffer all this  
Because of me, but supped on roots  
As if they were ambrosia,  
You slept on grass and I knowing this  
Am yet alive; all I have to do  
is to wear that priceless, glittering crown."

The mighty prince had more to ask.  
"If this was where the great one slept,  
Where did he who went with him  
In his boundless love?" and the hunter replied:

"While that handsome prince and she slept,  
Lakshmana bow in hand, and eyes

Filled with tears, O mighty one,  
Kept watch through the night, wide awake."

Bharata hearing this remarked,  
"We are by birth both Rama's brothers,  
But while I caused his endless woes,  
He is there to wipe them away.  
How boundless his love! And what a beauty my  
service !"

He lay down that night in the dust there  
And said to Guha, "O hunter king  
Who can put to flight your enemies,  
If you will carry us across the Ganga  
You will have taken us to Rama across a sea of  
troubles !"

"Very well," said Guha, and went to his kinsmen.  
"Bring the boats," he said, and they came in a heap  
As if Shiva's silver mountain, and Meru the golden  
And Kubera's air car, all shy to be single  
Had split themselves into numerous forms !

The boats which put women and swans to shame  
In their gait from one bank to the other  
Covered the Ganga completely  
Resembling in their lifting and dropping  
The traffic between heaven and earth  
Brought about by virtue and sin.

"Countless boats have arrived, prince ",  
Said Srīngiberi's chief. "What is your pleasure?"  
And Bharata looked at Sumantra and said,  
"My father, embark the army quick ",

Commanded by the prince, Sumantra  
Loaded the boats without disorder  
So that the elephants, horses, chariots and men  
Crossed Ganga scattering gems with her waves.

Like the thunderous clouds at dissolution  
Which had drunk up all the sea's waters  
And as if a sea was covered with masts  
The elephants, trunks raised, swam the river.

By the fierce elephants pushing ahead  
Sweeping conchs, sharks, pearls and gems,  
The sea seemed to fill the place  
Vacated by Ganga leaving her bank  
As if she too had a tryst with Rama !

The elephants' must streaming from their bodies  
Hid them in the river, showing only their heads  
Which, covered by the waves of the river  
Were like the breasts of Ganga under a lovely sari.

The chariots hard as diamonds.  
Were transported piecemeal  
Tops, floors, axles, wheels  
Walls and flags taken apart  
In order along with the maned horses  
Like elements of the human body  
Taken apart by Fate when dead<sup>1</sup>.

Eight crore horses went in boats  
Sailing fast like a school of carp  
Their bodies milk-white, their hearts full of fear  
Their legs swift like the fleeting wind.

Rows of maidens braceleted  
Standing in, face to face,  
Were like rows of elephants  
Their breasts like tusks into each other !

When the boats in their speed rammed each other  
The eyes of the maids gold-bedecked  
Looking in fear from side to side  
Resembled the leaping carp in the river.

The hunters playing the boats with their oars  
Sprinkled the water on either side  
Which wetting the maidens' saris revealed  
Their middles to the young men and lessened their grief !

1. It is also possible to interpret this:  
"Like dead limbs reassembled  
Of those destined to transmigrate."

The boats which transported the sea-like army  
From this bank to that and came back empty  
Resembled the clouds which absorb the sea water,  
Pour it as rain and come back to refill.

Huge big staffs with flags and pearls  
And peacock plumes like akil smoked  
Stuck in plates of red gold  
Were like mast poles in a boat  
Carrying long and fluttering sails.

With their lotus faces, lightning limbs and ambrosial mouths,  
Their tresses shedding honey, the women were heavenly nymphs  
Riding the broad Ganga in boats scattering water like pearls  
As if in their aerial cars they rode a star-strewn sky !

The oars on the river looking like legs,  
The boats seemed to walk on the Ganga  
As if the women, with their eyes like the carp  
And their miens like a joyous peacock,  
Had by the touch of their lotus feet  
Endowed those boats with life !

Like the gods the sages left by air—  
Their minds their aerial cars,  
They would not be contaminated  
By boats plied by low-caste men.  
Is there in the pure heavens,  
On earth and the other world  
A power which never fails  
Equal to penance ?

The army numbering sixty-thousand  
*Akshauhinis*, and the flood  
Of spotless men and women citizens  
Left Ganga and her waves behind.

When he saw that the army around him  
Had crossed the river with its pools  
Bharata rose as he had risen  
Shaming all the earthly kings  
Above every greedy ambition.

When his brother, his only like,  
His three mothers, Sumantra and Guha  
Got into the boat after him,  
That boat began to move on its oars.

Bowing to her who stood there  
Worthy of worship by relatives and gods,  
Guha asked, "Who is this lady?"  
And was told, "The first wife of one  
At whose courtyard kings would wait.  
That fortune which was due to her.  
For mothering one elder to Brahma  
She has lost through my birth."  
At which he wept and fell at her feet  
And Kausalya,  
Distressed like a heifer which has lost  
Its just-born calf,  
Asked Bharata who he was and was told  
"A dear friend of Rama  
The elder brother of Lakshmana, Shatrughna and me,  
A prince with the name  
Of Guha, and shoulders as high as the hills"

"Son," she said, "no longer should you feel  
Worn out by distress—  
Even the exile of the two heroes  
Has borne good fruit  
With this powerful tusker you should feel  
Not four but five  
And all five together rule a long time  
The wide world as one."

Looking at her who stood by her self  
Like Dharma in person,  
"Tell me, Sir, about her who is  
So full of love,"  
Said Guha—and Bharata replied,  
"The younger wife  
Of him who died for Truth  
And the mother  
Of that inseparable who shows the world  
That Rama has a brother."

When Guha asked, "Who is this?"  
 Of her who sent her husband to the pyre.  
 Plunged her son in a sea of woe  
 And sent to the forest the sea of grace  
 Filling with malice from where she sat  
 All the worlds which Vishnu once  
 Had to go out to measure at length  
 Bharata replied to him:

"The mother of woes, the foster-mother  
 Of all blame  
 Who carried me in her sinful womb  
 A long long while  
 That I may pine and see in this world  
 No life at all,  
 If you don't know her, the only one here  
 With a face untroubled,  
 Let me introduce to you  
 Her—my mother!"

He heard and raised his hand in reverence  
 To her too, the ruthless, as to a mother;  
 And the boat like a female swan  
 Not using feathers came ashore.

The mothers descending from the boat  
 Got into palanquins;  
 While Bharata, eyes brimming with tears,  
 Walked the long distance, Guha beside him.

Lovingly he reached the place  
 Of Bharadwaja the great sage.  
 Rid of burdens through boons obtained,  
 And was by him met and welcomed  
 With many old and learned Brahmins.

From *Ramayanam*, c. 9th-12th century

Tr. by P. S. Sundaram

3

Vali and Rama

Realizing that Rama had killed him, Vali said to Rama:

"O Rama, Fate indeed has blindly made  
 You son of him who threw away his life

For honour's sake and truth's; but should you too  
 Have seen the light before the saintly Bharat ?  
 You punish evil deeds: but do they cease  
 To be ill deeds when you are yourself doer ? . . .

"Can any count your blessings? Learning, birth,  
 Beauty, and Valour are all yours; and you  
 Are heir to a sceptre wielding power o'er all  
 The worlds ! And you have shown the strength and skill  
 Of your arm even now: were all these given  
 To you alone to bring eternal shame  
 Upon the name of Knight? And you are wise,  
 I've heard it said !

"All high virtues come  
 By instinct to the children of your race:  
 How then could you this deed of shame commit?  
 I fear your mind has lost its balance, since  
 You did from Janaka's swan-like daughter part,  
 Who was as life to you and very soul !

"Now tell me, Ram, has Manu anywhere  
 Ordained that if a Rakshasa parts your wife  
 From you, you must at once destroy the king  
 Of apes ? Where's gone your tenderness, O man ?  
 And how have I offended you ? If you  
 Should run thus after infamy, on whom  
 Should Glory shed her rays ?

"In all this wide  
 World ocean-tirt, should the Age of Iron dawn  
 Alone upon an ape ? Are equity  
 And right reserved alone for feeble ones ?  
 I did forget; when Might committeth sin  
 Doth not the world bestow on it a crown ?

"And who can beat your glory ? For you gave  
 A kingdom to your brother at Ayodh!  
 And here jungles wild, to balance that  
 You have my kingdom on my brother here  
 As gift bestowed !

"You have now yourself shown. O Ram, that power  
 Can work its will, just, secure;

But say, if you are right in killing me,  
Because you could your arrow aim unseen,  
Can you at all the Rakshas king accuse  
Of carrying off your spouse by force or guile ?

“When two in duel stand engaged, the just  
Regard them both with equal eye: but if  
A man is moved towards one, and hid behind  
A bush, does shoot the other down with sharp  
And pointed arrows aiming at the heart.  
Is it an act of Dharma?—or something else ?

“It is not valour you have shown, or love  
Or equity; there is no feud betwixt  
Your house and mine: my body did not press  
Your earth with its intolerable weight; and sure  
You would not call your sinful deed a deed  
Of mercy; what then was in your mind, O Ram ?

“If you did hanker after an ally  
To fight the war against the Rakshas king,  
What wisdom led you to turn your back upon  
The tusker roaming fearless o’er the wilds  
And kneel you down before a puny hare ?

“It is the moon alone that had a spot  
Till now upon her face: the sun remained  
A stainless globe of light. But you have taken  
Your birth in his thrice glorious house, and lo,  
He beats the moon in the blackness of his spot !

“Are not ashamed to show your face as man  
And warrior, who have laid trap for me,  
A mortal dart against my chest, when I  
But came to meet a foe that challenged me ?  
Your conduct gives the lie to the learning which  
They say you do possess; your deed has brought  
Disgrace upon your great forbears ! For, Man !  
You have not killed Vali, but have destroyed  
The fence that shields the seedling Dharm from ill !

“O fie on you! A foe has carried off  
Your spouse, while on your idle shoulder lies



That bow mocking your valour. Is't only good  
In unfair fight concealed for shooting down  
An unarmed foe ?”

After Rama justified his action, Vali said to Rama:

“O you who are th' embodiment of right !  
From e'en the way that you have dealt with us  
I clearly see your justice stern and love  
To living kind as deep as is a mother's.  
Forgive my sins, O Lord, and counting me  
A mere ape, take not to heart the words  
With which I you reproached. O giver of good,  
Who are the medicine rare that cures the ills  
Of birth and death ! You have your arrow aimed  
Against my chest, and at the point of death  
Has given me *jnan*. You are the One Supreme,  
You are Three in One, you are the All;  
What else there is, e'en are you ! Both Sin  
You are and Dharm, and foe you are, and friend !  
Is there a Dharm other than your dart  
Which has destroyed the blessings given by Shiv  
And other gods and pierced from front to back  
My powerful chest ? Great Shiv blesses all  
By power acquired by only saying your name.  
Now what is hard for me to get, when I  
Behold your holy self in flesh and blood ?  
Sages have said that you are everything  
And all, and Time, and fruit that Time evolves:  
The world's the flower, and you the scent thereof.  
Can heaven escape me now that I have seen  
Yourself with fleshly eyes ? You have seen  
Who are but Dharm in human shape: all the sins  
That I have done from ancient days up to  
This moment—all are burnt away today !  
Is there a better good that brother can  
To brother do ? Sugriv has brought you here  
To kill me with your dart, which straight does take  
Me to the realms of heaven, leaving him  
The tasteless, empty crown of an earthly realm.

“Permit me now, O Ram, to make to thee  
A dying prayer: if he, my brother, errs,  
His mind confused by drink, aim not at him,

I pray with joined hands, the death that's named  
Your dart that you have aimed at me. And see  
That your own brothers point not the finger of scorn  
Against Surgriv for having brought about  
My death: for you had yourself sworn to right  
His wrongs; and how could he be charged for deeds  
That flow therefrom as effects from their cause ?

"For other things, O Victor, though unblessed,  
That fortune might yet have been mine to place  
Before you Ravan tied unto my tail,  
And show you all my little monkey tricks.  
Alas, e'en this has been denied to me  
But what avails it now to think of all  
That might have been ? Let's think alone of that  
Which might yet be: if you desire the king  
Of Lanka to be brought to you o'er here  
In chains tied hand and foot, or anything  
Impossible for others to attempt,  
Behold this Hanuman, he will fulfil  
Your every, hest. Look on this hero, Lord,  
As a bow ready bent in your own hand.  
Look on my brother as yours; nowhere can't find  
Allies like unto these. Pursue, therefore,  
O Ram, your search for Sita fair, your queen."

4

Rama to Hanuman

Just when Hanuman takes leave of Rama, to go to Lanka, the latter tells Hanuman: -

Even the lotus has its petals pale,  
The moon has got its spot, and where is form  
Of any kind without the slightest fault ?  
But you will see no imperfection mar  
Her shapely form. Great Brahma made the flute  
And *vina*, parrots, *koils*, and children's babble,  
And then he coped all sweetness with her voice;  
But nought could he created to parallel  
Her speech and tone and can he e'er succeed  
If he should try ev'n now for all his life ?

Though earth and heaven should search to find its like  
 What can approach *amrit*<sup>1</sup> in taste ? And what  
 Can e'er compare with the sweetness of her speech ?  
 You think of honey and *amrit*, but can  
 They e'er delight the ear ?  
 Remind her that our eyes did first commingle  
 When I a stranger came to Mithila town,  
 The while she stood beside the dovecot fair  
 In her virgin bower. Recall again to her  
 How I beheld her form, like a lightning young,  
 And full of grace, at Jan'ka's palace hall.  
 Tell her I call to mind her great resolve,  
 When I the bow of Shiv broke in two,  
 To end herself if I should other prove  
 Than whom she saw with holy Kaushika.  
 Recall to her my words, when she resolved  
 To follow me to wilds unseen before:  
 I said, "O Sita, you were a fount of joy  
 To me till now: but now you wilt become  
 The source of griefs innumerable if you  
 Persist in your desire.' And she replied  
 With tears in her eyes, 'When you leave  
 Your crown, and take yourself to forest-life,  
 O love, is everything supportable  
 By you excepting only me ?' And last  
 Remind her how, when we had barely passed  
 The gates of Oudh, she stopped and asked, 'Where is  
 The forest boundless in expanse ? Are we  
 Arrived in it ?"

## 5

## Sita to Hanuman

When Hanuman asks for her message to Rama, Sita tells Hanuman:

"But one more moon shall I endure e'en here—  
 This is my message true, O righteous one !—  
 More, I shall not my life sustain. And this,  
 I swear by him my king ! Take this to heart !

1. The immortal drink of the gods.

"Tho' I might not be fitting mate to him  
Of garland rolling chest, tho' his heart be void  
Of ruth, tell him it is his duty plain  
To save his valour's fame.

"In but one moon austerity mine expires;  
If he does not come here within that time,  
Let me on banks of Ganga's tidal flood  
With lotus hands of his my obsequies  
Perform !

"Remind him of the solemn vow he made  
That day he took my hand in wedlock rite:  
"Not e'en in thought will I in this my life  
A second woman touch"; he swore to me:  
Drum these words in his ear.

"Do make it clear to him that I but crave  
With salutation low this single boon:  
E'en if I stay and end my life down here,  
Let it be granted me to be reborn  
And gain the blessing rare which ends all sin—  
To touch his form divine.

"The while he rules enthroned, or rides in state  
The haltered elephant with bells of choice,  
Or his resplendent aspects manifold  
On avenues to see I am not blest.  
Of what avail is it to speak of them ?  
Let me on my past karma dwell.

"To the world sore languishing for him so long,  
At his mother's grief, and at distress which Bharat  
Endures, he'll speed. To me in agony  
Down here, how would he come ?

\* \* \*

"Now speed thee hence: may you avoid all harm:  
I have no more to add; all that I need,  
I've said. To my leige repeat, as wise you are,  
What is but propitious  
"Once on the mountain side where elephants

Do range, a raven came and clawed me sore  
 With cruel toes, and lo, in fiery rage  
 He took a blade of grass that lay at hand,  
 And one relentless dart he sped.

"Recount how Jayantha, the lustful crow—  
 Devender's son—to Shiv and all the gods  
 Besides in terror flew, and each in turn  
 Asylum barred; and all with one accord  
 Cried: "Fall, fall at his lotus feet  
 And refuge gain!"

"Say how when he, affrighted far, to earth  
 Flew down entreating loud "O Lord, your feet,  
 Your feet's retreat I seek", and prostrate fell,  
 The Bounteous Lord well pleased did bid the dart  
 Depart content with but one baleful eye.  
 Forthwith the raging dart divine was spent.

"Because you cried, 'asy'um 'sylum grant,'  
 The Lord said, 'straightway on your heinous crime  
 Forbearance I bestow." And he decreed,  
 "Hence let the raven race, whose form you bear  
 In front of me, have but one eye-ball each."  
 And so it came to pass. E'en this relate.

"Add how as Jayantha left freed of fear,  
 The Devas flowers rained, and Lakshmana  
 Uncomprehending puzzled stood: e'en thus  
 This victory so sweet relate."

## 6

### Hanuman to Rama

On his return from Lanka Hanuman reports to Rama.

Came Han'man: and coming, worshipped not  
 His Majesty's twin feet but turned to her  
 Devoid of bloom; with hands held o'er his head  
 In reverence, he fell down flat on earth,  
 And long intoned her name !

"I saw," he sang in ecstasy, "I saw  
With my own eyes the Gem of Chastity  
In sea-girt Lanka in the south. Cast off  
Your fears, my Lord, and grief of old !

"On privilege as noble wife to you,  
On truth as worthy daughter to your sire,  
On proper conduct fitting her descent  
From Jan'ka, King of Mithila, in sooth,  
She has a crown bestowed — the Goddess mine!

"To gold, gold is the match; to her, she 'lone;  
She matches you to you alone; and me,  
She grants as well, there's none but me to match !

"O bowman brave with mighty shoulders broad !  
In roaring sea-laved Lanka on the hill  
Not maiden rare of virtues great I saw,  
But Noble Birth and Patience Boundless self  
And her called Chastity, I saw all three  
Step a dance in ecstasy !

"In her eyes you dwell, and in her thoughts as well;  
On her lips you play, and in the very depths  
Of her heart besides; and in unhealing wound  
Which Manmath's dart of blossoms has bored deep.  
Then how could it be said that she has e'er  
Parted from you?

"In Lanka 'midst the ocean deep,  
Beneath sky-reaching forest dark  
Unknown to either morn or noon.  
In a bower under lofty trees,  
In the grassy hut your brother built,  
Dwells she—the stern austerity  
Of Austerity herself!"

7

Vibhishana and Kumbhakarna

Vibhishana goes to meet his brother Kumbhakarna and then the latter receives him.

He lifted up the brother that clasped his feet,  
 And folding him unto his breast, he thus  
 Addressed him: "I was glad to learn, my brother,  
 That you had left our doomed camp and ta'en  
 Refuge with Ram. Why leave you now his side,  
 You innocent, and come to us that rush  
 Headlong into the jaws of death? Will you  
 Exchange your nectar for our poison black?  
 Although our glory's sun is set for ever,  
 I thought Pulastyas's race would be redeemed  
 By you, and I was glad. But you have dried  
 My lips and broke my heart by your return.  
 You have thrown yourself at their feet who are  
 The props of Dharm, and they will never give  
 You up, e'en when it means their death. You are freed  
 From curse of death so long as men praise Rama  
 And you have 'scaped the curse of Rakshas birth:  
 What further craving then does bring you here?  
 By serving th' One Supreme with all your soul!  
 You have the blessing gained of holy life  
 And pure: will you yet look on us as kin  
 Who hanker after other's wives? Great Brahm  
 Has blessed you with a righteous heart, my child,  
 And wisdom unsurpassed; while Rama's word  
 Has given e'erlasting life. And still you are here:  
 I fear they have not cured the cravings low  
 Of your Rakshas birth! . . . . .  
 If you do spurn the shelter he has given  
 And cast your lot with us, pray tell me, brother,  
 When all the rakshas race is swept from off  
 The face of th' earth by Rama's furious darts,  
 Who will be there to offer sacrifice  
 To our Manes? Go back, therefore, to Raghava  
 And enter Lanka after it is purged  
 of all this sinful crew; and, crowned by Ram  
 Enjoy a reign of glory unsurpassed.

"The grand-souled hero who, his mercy sweet,  
 Has showered on me, unworthy, will accept  
 Your homage too, if you will come to him,  
 And save you from the cycle of birth and death.  
 The crown that he has offered me, I'll place  
 At your feet, and serve you as my king and lord,

For you are elder born. You will not hear:  
But death is certain if you stand against  
Rama. When he his flaming shafts does send,  
Can you escape ? And whither can you fly?  
Throw not, therefore, your life away, my brother,  
But base your ways upon the eternal Ved.

"The righteous care not whe'r 'tis father, mother,  
Or child, but cut themselves away, if these  
Persist in mortal sin. . . . .

"For crime of one, shall we that know no guilt  
Ruin ourselves by fighting on his side ?  
And holy Parashuram, did he not kill  
His very mother for her sin ? Ev'n Shiv  
Cut off great Brahma's head when he from right  
Did swerve: you are wise, learn you upon them. Shall we  
Support a heinous crime and choose the way  
That leads to hell ? The flesh diseased that grows  
Upon our body we cut off and burn  
If we would keep the body whole: do ever  
The wise mix paste of sandalwood to change  
The stench of ocean stream ? . . . . . "

You can't hope to save your brother now.  
And ev'n if fight with all your former strength  
What would it all avail ? You may throw  
Your life away: You may matter give  
For vassal gods to mock; but in the end  
Will aught but Hell receive your parted soul ?

Though great your valour, you have not tasted joys  
Of sovereign power, but wasted all your youth.  
And manhood in unbecoming sleep. And now  
Desire you to fight for sin, and waste  
Your life itself? O brother, follow me;  
The time itself is ripe; and blessed by Ram  
Conquer your sleep and gain eternal life  
And sovereignty which is your right.

Perhaps,  
You think it disgrace to owe your crown  
To Ram. But know that he is God of gods  
Himself, who's born as man to 'stablish Dharm. . . .

If you would come to Rama you would earn  
The friendship of the gods and blessings choice  
Of Rishis; and none would dare to injure you.



And joy would come to you that knows no end.  
 'Tis he that in the fulness of his love.  
 And mercy sent me here. Do e'er the wise  
 Go gathering flowers when fruits hang ripe upon  
 The tree ? Abandon you therefore the camp  
 Of Sin and follow me."

Kumbhakarna replies:

"Can I refuse to give my life for him  
 Who all these years has cherished me, and now  
 Has sent me to the field to fight ? Is life  
 So dear, that's transient as the wavelets playing  
 On the flowing stream ? So if you want to heal  
 My sorrow, brother, tarry not, but do  
 Return to Ram. By great devotion you  
 Have got from Brahm the blessing of a heart  
 That's free from thoughts of sin: the crown therefore  
 Of all the worlds does well befit your head.  
 But I'm a sinner born, and Fate is just  
 That dooms me to death: — and it will crown  
 My head with glory's light, my sole delight.

"When kings swerve from virtue, 'tis but right  
 To chide and try to turn their hearts from sin.  
 But if they would not hear, can those who have  
 Their bounties tasted see their masters run  
 To ruin, unmoved ? No, when the enemies press,  
 They'll gird their swords, and seek their fate upon  
 The field before he falls foredoomed. When Ram  
 Does aim his fatal darts, and Ravan falls  
 Embracing the earth, surrounded by his kin  
 And loyal troops, shall he a brother lack  
 To fall with him,— he who the worlds and gods  
 Without a rival ruled ? And when his arms  
 That lifted sheer the rock of Shiv are tied  
 With cruel cords by messengers of Death,  
 Shall he with downcast eyes approach the throne  
 Of Yam, his vassal e'en today, without  
 A brother by his side ? And can I brook—  
 Ev'n I who have defeated the God of Death  
 Himself— can I consent to pass my days,  
 Singing with an aching heart the praise of him  
 Who will have pierced my brother's mighty chest ? . .

"So tarry not, my child; and if you have  
 Regard for me, or love, return to Ram,  
 Abide with him. Think not I can be turned  
 From my resolve by further words. Now go:  
 And when w're dead, (this is my dying prayer)  
 Do soothe our Manes with Vedic rites, and save  
 Us from the gates of hell. Weep not, my brother  
 When time does smile on us, all things we touch  
 Are turned to gold: but when the tide has fled  
 Despite our every care we rush to ruin,  
 Helpless. What can I tell you more whose eyes  
 See straight and clear? So do not pity us  
 Nor waste your tears, but go from hence in peace."

8

Indrajit and Ravana

When Indrajit having failed to complete his sacrifice appears before Ravana,  
 the latter asks him to explain why he looks desperate.

"Your brother has betrayed my secrets, Sire,  
 To the foe who has my sacrifices spoiled.  
 And broke the force of all my darts divine. . . .  
 If weapon blessed of him who made the heavens  
 And earth does bow to him and turn aside  
 Harmless, what can our other arms effect?  
 Our race has sinned, or such a subtle foe  
 Arises not for us. If Lakshman frowns,  
 I fear he can the three worlds blow to dust.  
 The brothers from using Brahma's dart refrained  
 In battles past, because, I ween, they feared  
 'T would hurt the peopled worlds; and so I won.  
 But now they've parried clean my heaviest arms,  
 And having tasted our unconquered might  
 They stand resolved to finish all our race!  
 Think not therefore, my liege, that I am seized  
 With fear: I speak for love of you: If you  
 Will conquer your desire for Rama's spouse  
 And her release, they will forgive our sins.  
 And go from hence."

So said the Rakshasa

Whose arms had to their centre shook the worlds !  
 The king of Lanka laughed, and with stinging words  
 He thus addressed his son: "I ween you are,  
 My son, now unfit grown for war: I see  
 confusion in your mind: fear not the race  
 Of men, and worry you no more. This day  
 I'll take the field with only bow in hand,  
 With none to guard my side, and I'll bring  
 You victory ! Think not I counted on  
 The Rakshasas who are already fallen:  
 Think not that I did count on those who're yet  
 Alive: think not I hoped that you would beat  
 My foes upon the field: in my sole right arm  
 I placed my trust, and I provoked this war !  
 You talk like a child, my son: this life.  
 Transient as the bubble in the stream  
 I may e'en in the sight of beaten gods  
 Forfeit upon the field, for then, 't will shine  
 With glory's halo that will never dim:  
 But her, can I renounce, I twenty-armed ?  
 E'en if I lose, if Rama's name will stand,  
 My name, will not it also last as long  
 As Veds are sung on earth ? We live to-day,  
 To-morrow finds us not: but glory, does  
 It even die? Let it be known for once  
 That I have Sita sent away, would not  
 The gods besiege my Lanka ? Die, I may;  
 But can I stoop to shame and littleness—  
 E'en I who am the terror of the heavens  
 And earth ? What more ? You may go to your home  
 And, from your chest the infinite barbs removed,  
 Lay down upon your bed and sleep in peace!"  
 He said, and turning on the instant towards  
 Th' attendant heralds like a tiger roused,  
 He thundered, "Order forth my battle-car!"

"Pardon, my liege, the boldness of my words:  
 At least when I am gone, may your eyes see  
 The good."

[So said Indrajit and went to war]

## Periyapuranam

### SEKKILAR

SEKKILAR (Śēkkiḷār, 11th-12th century) is the nom de plume of Arunmoli Thevar, an eminent minister of Kulothunga Chola (11th century). He toured extensively throughout the Chola land in search of the life and letters of the sixty-three Nayanmars. His keen interest blended with dedicated service made *Periyaupuranam* (Periya Purānam) his magnum-opus. It enumerates the committed life of sixty-three Shaiva devotees, who at the pinnacle of their commitment were raised as Nayanmars. They include Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar.

According to T.P. Meenakshisundaram, the Nayanmars, "irrespective of caste, education, sex or avowed religion, are great as following the respective ideals they have chosen, lay down their lives the moment they feel it impossible to live up to that ideal, however low or high, simple or complex, it be, all however in the service of God in man, a service which is more blissful and therefore greater than even their selfish individual salvation."

Though it is named "Puranam", it is considered an epic because of its literary qualities.

His capital was Tiru-k-Kovalur in goodly Sethi realm;  
He hailed from Malayaman dynasty which served  
Ammal-Appar from generation to generation;  
He, the princer was poised in the noble way true, of the Vedas  
And served the Lord's servitors divining their true wish. (467)

He adhered flawlessly to the righteous way of monarchic code;  
He quelled his foes by the valour of his shoulders strong;  
He swerved not from the plighted word and ruled gloriously;  
He for ever contemplated the habit of devotees  
Of the Lord whose matted hair sports the billowy flood. (468)

In all the temples of Ammal-Appar, poojas were  
Gloriously and unfailingly performed;  
In temples flourished music sevenfold and dance;  
Thus ruled the adorable prince adoring,  
Whose sole sustaining force was the feet of the Lord's servitors. (469)

All the riches and wealth he came by as a prince  
Were ear-marked for the devotees of the Lord  
Who dances in Tillai Ambalam;  
When devotees sought him to supply their wants  
He gave them plenty and in soaring joy. (470)

Whilst thus he flourished, a hostile king  
 Fired by a desire to vanquish him,  
 Waged wars against him many a time, only to lose  
 His elephantry and cavalry and infantry.  
 Thus repeatedly defeated he was sunk in shame. (471)

The worsted king who could not think of victory  
 In the field of battle, coming to know  
 Of the religious piety of Mei-p-Porul, desired  
 To ape his great habit of wearing the holy ash  
 And thus win by deception; his mind  
 Nurtured such unspeakable evil, and he  
 Prepared for his infiltration into Tiru-k-Kovalur. (472)

He smeared all over his person the holy ash;  
 He had his hair matted and tied it into a crown;  
 He held a mega biblion which concealed a dagger;  
 Like a lamp thick with black at the wick, his mind  
 Harboured deception; thus in his false habit of tapas  
 Mutthanathan barged in. (473)

In the mansions of the long and dazzling streets  
 Danced damsels, liana-like, whose coiffures  
 Were with flowers wreathed; over the mansions  
 From their flag-poles wafted white flags bright;  
 The cruel-hearted one in the disguise of a great *tapaswi*  
 Passed through these and arrived at  
 The beauteous palace of the King of Sethi realm. (474)

The guards of the palace adored him with folded hands,  
 And said: "The Lord Himself is come ! Be pleased to step in !"  
 He crossed many a threshold and arrived at the last one;  
 Thither stood *Thatthan* who beseeched him thus;  
 "Be pleased to regard the hour; the King slumbers." (475)

When he spake thus, he countered him thus:  
 "I am to initiate him in the way of salvation;  
 You be here." He passed beyond him into the chamber  
 Where the king was sleeping on a cot wrought of gold;  
 He also beheld seated by his side his queen,  
 The one of soft mien and perfumed locks. (476)

When he neared him, the queen swiftly descended  
 From the cot and woke up the garlanded king;  
 The king rose up, and folding his hands over his head  
 Said: "To the servitor of the God of gods, praise be !"  
 And he stood bowing before him as was his wont. (477)

"For my life to thrive auspicious by and be crowned  
 With its fruit, I am blessed with your visit!  
 To what good luck do I owe this ?" Thus spake the king.  
 "I have come here to instruct you in the *Agama*  
 Authored of yore by your God and not to be seen  
 In *orbis terarum*". Thus he replied. (478)

"Can there be a beatitude greater than this ?  
 Be pleased to bless me by reading out  
 The peerless *Agama* of the Lord." Thus spake the king.  
 "Your queen decked with fragrant garlands  
 Must first part from you, and then, you and I  
 Must seek a different spot lonely." Thus he. (479)

He commanded in love his consort, *Lakshmi*-like,  
 To hasten to the gynaeceum, and then had him,  
 —The one robed in the weeds of a *tapaswi*—,  
 Installed on a seat, while he himself sat on the ground.  
 Then he said: "Be pleased to grace me." (480)

He placed on his lap the treacherous scroll  
 And pretended to unwind the rope binding it.  
 When the king bowed low reverentially, he drew out  
 The dagger and did what he intended to do;  
 The king exclaimed, still adoring;  
 "The true habit of ascetics is indeed the truth supreme."  
 (Surely it is) the king (who) triumphed: (481)

*Thatthan* who kept surveillance over him,  
 Even when he who concealing him in the garb  
 Of a *tapaswi* broke into the king's chamber,  
 Now darted into the room, and was about to smite him  
 With his sword; the king who was to fall down  
 As blood pofusely gushed forth from him,  
 Stretched out his long arm, prevented his deed  
 And exclaimed: "*Thattha*, he is our own." Then he fell down. (482)

*Thatthan* the servitor who was thus restrained  
 By the prince who suffered pain and fell down,  
 Bowed low, and said: "What should I do?"  
 The prince replied him thus: "Let none obstruct  
 The devotee of our Lord on his way back.  
 You go with him and see to his safe passage." (483)

All those that came to know of the happening  
 Hemmed them on all sides and said:  
 "We'll kill him, the false saint who had harmed the king."  
*Thatthan* prevented them from harming him, took him with him  
 And said: "He is permitted to go by the king's command." (484)

When they heard this they moved away by reason  
 Of the dread command; *Thatthan* took him  
 Through the royal highway and crossed the city;  
 With the sword drawn protectively, he reached  
 The forest by men unfrequented, and left him there,  
 And then returned. (485)

With effort great, the prince still bore his ebbing life  
 Only to hear the news that the one of deceptive habit  
 Had been conveyed safe, unmolested by opposing hordes;  
 Before him came he who carried out the royal mandate. (486)

He hailed his feet and said: "I had safely escorted  
 Him who by his made-believe habit had won."  
 Hearing this the prince said: "Who can ever do  
 Like unto what you—the great one—, had this day  
 For me done". His eyes rained on the one that stood there  
 Immense loving-kindness soulful. (487)

He addressed his parting words of message  
 To the ministers, to the loving and languishing wife  
 And to the kin, and said: "Honour the rule which bids you  
 Foster love for the holy ash." This said,  
 He meditated on the flower-feet of the Lord  
 That dance in the Ambalam. (488)

To the devotee-prince, the Lord of Himavant's daughter  
 Granted *darshan* in the form in which  
 He contemplated Him for many a day.  
 The Lord graced him to attain the shade

Of His ankleted feet inaccessible to the celestials,  
And also blessed him with the beatitude  
To adore Him for ever. (489)

Even when his dear life was done away with,  
Deeming him a devotee of the Lord-God  
The prince of Sethi realm fostered the great way.  
I hail his glory in my humble way;  
With the golden feet of contentious *Viran Mindar*  
Set on my crown I now proceed no narrate his divine service. (490)

From *Periyapuranam*, 11th-12th century

Tr. by T. N. Ramachandran

## Selections

### AVVAIYAR

The name *Avvaiyār* means "old woman". There had been according to some scholars, six different poetesses bearing the same name. The author of the following selections is considered to be the third Avvaiyar who lived in the 12th century. The author of the last selection *Avvai Kural* is the fourth Avvaiyar whose date may be fixed as the 14th century.

Generally, it is said, Avvaiyar was a woman of considerable mental power and one who possessed the remarkable ability to compose excellent Tamil verse on the spot. She apparently never married but spent her days wandering from place to place, composing poems as inspiration seized her or in response to some request or challenge.

*Atti* denotes the ebony tree whose flower resembles the moon; *Chudi* means one who wears, and thus *Attichudi* refers to Lord Shiva. *Konrai* means cassia flower. *Konraiventan* also denotes Lord Shiva, as he is considered to be wearing the garland of cassia. *Muturai* means. "old saying" and *Nalvazhi* means "right path".

Avvaiyar's poems express eternal truths and perennial wisdom in the most cryptic language.

The aphorisms on Yoga show the high spiritual advancement of the Tamil people and are valuable even today to those who are interested in transcendental meditation.

### 1

### The Wearer of *Atti* Flower

Praise we now and worship oft and oft God Ganesha, the beloved son of Him who wears a garland of *Atti*<sup>1</sup>.

1. The tree *Euphorbia tirucali*.



The chance of doing good desire.  
Extinguish anger's kindling fire.  
The means at your command confess.  
Be no one hinder'd who would bless.

Of riches do not idly brag.  
Let zeal and courage never flag.  
Letters and numbers claim esteem.  
All shameless beginning shameful deem.  
Give alms, then eat with gratitude.

Be customs gratefully pursued.  
No idle pause in learning seek.  
A word of envy never speak.  
Make not the price of corn to rise.  
Let candid lips report your eyes.

Consort, like letters in array.  
The day to bathe is Saturday.  
In ways of justice keep your feet.  
Be found where saints and sages meet.

In speech be open and sincere.  
To what is excellent adhere.  
Nothing provoking anger say.  
With gamesters have no wish to play.  
In all you do, correctness show.

Go where you know you ought to go.  
Your steps from fault-detecting stay.  
Say plainly what you have to say.  
Get not the wand'ring idler's name.  
Acquire the well-known worthy's fame.

Let priests your cheerful presents view.  
To Perumal pay service due.  
From sin desist, and evil chase.  
To care and trouble give no place.  
Consider well ere you essay.

Despise not God, but keep His way.  
Live with your countrymen agreed.

The words of women do not heed.  
The things of eld be kept in view.  
No doubtful dangerous course pursue.

Hold fast the good until the end.  
Perform such acts as all commend.  
Where you were born, contented stay.  
You should not in the water play.  
Be dainties from your table spurn'd.

Let many sciences be learn'd.  
The rice-field diligently tend.  
Be righteousness your way and end.  
From fatal evils stand afar.  
With no low words your language mar.

By no excess disease induce.  
Bespatter none with foul abuse.  
Contract no friendship with a snake  
With wicked lips no mischief make.  
By patient toil at greatness aim.

In all your living, live for fame.  
First till the ground, then eat your rice.  
Consult your betters for advice.  
Let ignorance be put away.  
With children neither join nor stay.

Retain what you possess, and thrive.  
Nor stir to angry strife, nor strive.  
Preserve your mind from trouble free.  
Yield nothing to an enemy.  
Your words be but the few you need.

Do not immoderately feed.  
From where contention rages run.  
Perverse and stupid people shun.  
Only at home caresses seek.  
Incline the ear when wise men speak.

Avoid the doors where harlots dwell.  
Correctly told be all you tell.  
Throw every sinful lust aside.

Boast not your parts with foolish pride.  
In strife be not your word the first.

In knowledge covet to be versed.  
Be heaven your first and final aim.  
Acquire the good man's fragrant name  
Live happily among your own.  
Be sharp in neither word nor tone.

Desiring, do not therefore stray.  
Awake and rise at break of day.  
All intercourse with foes refuse.  
Say nothing base on partial views.

*Attichudi*, 12th-14th century

*Tr.* by Edward Jewilt Robinson

2

The Wearer of Konrai Flower

Worship we the sacred feet of Him who is the son of the Lord, adorned with the garlands of *cassia*.

Our parents first of all the gods are known.  
From temple worship matchless good accrues.  
True virtue lives in married life alone.  
What niggards heap the wicked get and use.

In little eating female beauty lies.  
His country's foe both branch and root decays.  
Figures and letters are a pair of eyes.  
Our children's balm-like fondness age delays.  
Your duty do, though with a beggar's fare.

One master serving, in one district stay.  
Good life in priests surpasses sounding prayer.  
The slanderer's substance quickly melts away.  
In seeking land and treasure spend your days.  
The wife who heeds her lord's commands is chaste.

In being watch' consists the sex's praise.  
Objects of vain pursuit, forget with haste.

Speak modestly, though by inferiors heard.  
The man who looks at faults no kindred own.  
Though sharp your arrow, use no braggart word.

All hurtful things are better let alone.  
The firm once ruin'd substance repossess.  
The rich are poor when wisdom's wealth appears.  
The monarch's smile brings succour to distress.  
Slander is wind to fire in willing ears.

The heartless railer all men hate and shun.  
No loving children bless the debauchee.  
The pride of parents is a learned son.  
True penance theirs, engross'd who Shiva see.  
In husbandry is trod the path of gain.

The worth of kindred is their being nigh.  
Gambling and brawling lead to grief and pain.  
Forgotten penance makes good fortune fly.  
Till midnight sleep not, though confined and still.  
Before you dine, give alms, however small.

Of good and joy the rich can have their fill.  
To vagrant beggary the idle fall.  
No word excels a father's sage decree.  
If not a mother's no advice is wise.  
In search of wealth, e'en cross the fearful sea.

From quenchless anger endless quarrels rise.  
A stubborn wife's firebrand in the breast.  
She's death who gives the winds your fault to show.  
God's wrath aroused, in vain men do their best.  
Who spend, yet nothing get, to ruin go.

Beneath a roof in *Tay* and *Masi* sleep.  
The freeman's plough procures the sweetest food.  
Who lack good company, in sorrow brood.  
No ills invade a neighbour-loving land.

By every word you calmly speak abide.  
Your dwelling fix where wells are at command.  
The smallest matters thoughtfully decide.

The laws you know consistently observe.  
No mask to others hides from self one's mind.

They fast in vain, from rules who idly swerve.  
Though poor your hearer, let your speech be kind.  
By diligence the mean may mighty grow.  
He does not fast who hungrily devours.  
The springing blades the coming crop foreshow.

Take food, though rice and milk, at proper hours.  
'Tis virtue from another's home to stay.  
Reserve your equal strength the load to bear.  
Eat not of flesh, nor steal, nor dare to slay.  
The base the garb of virtue cannot wear.

Who gain the highest state, nor hate nor love.  
Simplicity is woman's jewel bright.  
The earth bears those who gently move.  
All kings of evil banish out of sight.  
The ploughman's honest meal is food indeed.

With guests your meat, however costly, share.  
Where rain is wanted, there is every need.  
The welcome showers succeed the lightning's glare.  
The ship without a pilot makes no head.  
At eve, the fruit of morning's acts your reap.

There's nectar found in what the ancients said.  
Who softly lie, enjoy the sweetest sleep.  
What wealth the plough produces will remain.  
In silence wisdom has its end and proof.  
Their efforts, who disdain advice, are vain.

From black-eyed women go, and keep aloof.  
Be all excess e'en by the king eschew'd.  
No showers descending, fee-less Brahmans smart.  
Good manners hospitality include.  
A hero's friendship pierces like a dart.

The poor who scorn to beg deserve respect.  
The strength of wealth in perseverance lies.  
The incorrupt deceitful thoughts reject.

Let but the king be angry succour flies.  
Go, worship God in every face on earth.

Choose places fit wherein to close your eyes.  
The lagging student gains nor lore nor worth.

*Konraiventan*, 12th-14th century

*Tr.* by Edward Jewilt Robinson

3

Old Saying

*Invocation*

Who stately with floral gifts attend,  
Before the trunk-faced red-one's footstool bend  
And pious homage reverently pay  
Shall from the goddess lotus-throned acquire  
Wit, eloquence, and all that they desire,  
And never sink in bodily decay.

1

If suffering worth to acts of kindness move,  
Dismiss the fear your bounty may not prove  
A source at last of profit and delight;  
The water furnish'd to its early root,  
In sweeter draughts from future plenteous fruit  
The cocoa's crown will gratefully requite.

2

The valued favours the deserving gain  
Like sculptures in eternal rock remain;  
Of virtue's tribute charity is sure:  
But vain is kindness to the worthless shown,  
Who debts and duties evermore disown;  
On water written words as well endure.

3

When senseless grief the live-long day englooms,  
In vain attractively the garden blooms;

In vain the spouseless maid her beauty wears:  
So youth when needy is a tiresome stage,  
And wealth but misery in helpless age,  
A bitter mockery of peevish cares.

## 4

The love, though loved, the callous base ne'er learn  
But love for love the good and wise return;  
Their greatness through calamities remains;  
A purer whiteness as the sea-shell shows,  
When fiercely the containing furnace glows;  
As seething milk its flavour still retains.

## 5

Although in foliage richly dress'd they rise,  
In figure faultless, and mature in size.  
As trees no fruit except in season bear,  
In any project sooner to succeed,  
And gain the end before the time decreed,  
Nor wealth avails, nor toil, nor wakeful care.

## 6

Not softly yielding as the building towers,  
Not bending gently when the load o'erpowers,  
The stony column will asunder fly;  
So they who scorn their honour to survive  
'Gainst overwhelming adversaries strive,  
Refusing homage though they muster nigh.

## 7

The depth and surface of the pool decide  
The growth and limit of the lily's pride:  
So erudition is on study based;  
So riches show accumulated worth  
By penance purchased in a previous birth;  
So character from son to sire is traced.

8

Happy the eyes that on the pious rest,  
The ears that hear their useful words are bless'd,  
And bless'd the lips that all their virtues tell;  
More happy they, their character who wear,  
Their friendship gain, their reputation share,  
Their sacred paths frequent, and with them dwell.

9

The very sight of wicked men is ill,  
Their graceless words the ear with evil fill,  
The lips with risk their attributes portray,  
And 'tis the height of self-inflicted wrong  
To mingle with their sin-infectious throng,  
Attend their cursed steps, and with them stay.

10

The water turn'd to where the rice-crop grows  
Refreshes kindly, as it thither flows,  
The common grass that in its channel lies;  
In every age, the genial rains that fall  
To cheer the good, are shared alike by all,  
And virtue's revenue the world supplies.

11

To instruments the great their glory owe;  
The lofty are supported by the low;  
Without assistance rank and skill were vain;  
Too oft we spurn the object we should prize;  
The rice denuded unproductive dies,  
The husk we scorn preserves the living grain.

12

In bulk the scentless *ta/y* far excels;  
The little *magu*/flower more sweetly smells;  
In seeming meanness may be hidden worth:  
The spacious sea, with all its vauntful roar,  
E'en for ablution fits not, while ashore  
The humble spring with nectar gushes forth.



## 13

The branching trees that in the jungle grow  
No excellence like cultured palms can show:  
    Appearing proudly with the learned, he  
Who lacking skill to scan the proffer'd verse,  
Or seize the sense of what the rest rehearse,  
    Is disconcerted, stands a jungle tree.

## 14

As when the clumsy turkey, having seen  
The forest peacock step with graceful mien,  
    Struck with the beauty of his gorgeous train,  
And thinking one of kindred plume he spied,  
His feathers spread with pomp of strutting pride,  
    Poetic skill unlearned coxcombs feign.

## 15

Who aid the ingrate in their yearning zeal,  
Like him who dared the poison'd tiger heal,  
    But raise the prostrate to become their prey;  
And, like the vase that greets the granite block,  
Or freighted bark that strikes the sunken rock,  
    Their blind beneficence is thrown away.

## 16

Insult not over those in self-conceit  
Whose self-restraint may end in your defeat,  
    Though void they seem of wisdom, tact, and strength;  
If smaller fish may dart securely by,  
The heron watches with unerring eye  
    The proper victim, that appears at length.

## 17

No friends are they who heartlessly forsake,  
As water-fowl the sun-exhausted lake,  
    Their old associates in their time of need:  
As lilies wither when the pond gets dry,  
And, where they flourished, parch'd and prostrate lie,  
    Who share our troubles are our friends indeed.

18

The noble in distress are still esteem'd;  
 The mean of wealth bereft are worthless deem'd;  
     The former like a cup of gold are found  
 That fractured, its intrinsic worth retains;  
 The latter like an earthen bowl, that gains  
     Contempt when strew'd in fragments on the ground.

19

Because in ocean dipp'd not four times more  
 The measure holds than it could hold before.  
     What futile hopes our silly sex employ !  
 Though wealth be gain'd, and spousal sweets abound.  
 No greater happiness is therefore found,  
     Since fate has fix'd the limits of our joy.

20

'Tis not in blood that kindred only lies,  
 From birth connections that true friendships rise;  
     Disease congenital may mortal prove;  
 As distant mountains may the med'cine yield  
 By which alone a sickness can be heal'd,  
     A stranger may desponding care remove.

21

The dwelling with a frugal mistress bless'd,  
 Through all things lacking is of all possess'd,  
     For peace, content, and cleanliness are there;  
 The house not suited with a thrifty wife,  
 Or cursed with one intent on angry strife,  
     Though plenty reign, is like the tiger's lair.

22

Say, fretful spirit, whether shall ensue  
 The visionary good we fondly view,  
     Or every just award decreed by fate?

From Indra's tree, for fruits of blessing known,  
Who gilded nuts of poison pluck, atone  
For deeds that stain'd their pre-existent state.

## 23

By hasty wrath disjoin'd the meaner kind,  
Like broken stone, are never more combined;  
Remingle soon the better sort their hearts,  
Like fractured gold by fusion blent again;  
No longer sunder'd do the best remain  
Than water that the pointed arrow parts.

## 24

The learned to the erudite repair,  
As seeks the swan the placid water, where  
The lotus breathes its genial fragrance round  
But like the crow, by carrion-instinct led  
That scents the grave and lives upon the dead,  
The ignorant are with the foolish found.

## 25

While, conscious of his fatal power to harm,  
The guilty cobra hides in just alarm,  
The guileless water-snake abroad appears;  
Deceivers so, avoiding public view,  
In secret their perfidious schemes renew,  
While innocence at large no danger fears.

## 26

Though servile hosts the king's behests obey,  
The grave philosopher bears ampler sway;  
While homage meets the sage wherever known,  
And every step extends his spotless fame,  
The monarch's title is an empty name  
Beyond the narrow realms that prop his throne.

## 27

To fools, the words of the resentful wise,  
To vicious souls, the virtue they despise,

As plantains to the stalk from which they sprung.  
Are terrible as Yama's fatal name;  
But better still this suits the tyrant dame,  
They know, who fear and feel her clam'rous tongue.

28

Attrition, in its merciless delay,  
May wear the precious sandalwood away,  
But leaves its grateful fragrance all behind;  
So, though calamities their coffers drain,  
Triumphant o'er misfortune, kings retain  
Their royal fortitude of heart and mind.

29

With Lakshmi come, and vanish when she flies,  
The pleasures that from constant friendships rise,  
Resources keeping pace with high desire,  
The pride of beauty, dignity of birth,  
And all things loved and coveted on earth;  
Then, toil for wealth, and prize what you acquire.

30

Till by the ringing axe in ruin laid,  
As trees afford a cool refreshing shade  
To mortals shrinking from the scorching heat,  
The sons of knowledge, till they cease to live,  
As far as can be, good for evil give,  
And acts of kindness to their foes repeat.

*Muturai*, 12th -14th century

Tr. by Edward Jewilt Robinson

4

## The Right Path

i

### Control of the Nadis

The word *nadi* means tubes and applies to *sukshma* or subtle astral currents. There is a circuit formed by the primary *sushumna* (the spinal cord) going into

the brain, thence the secondary *sushumna* hangs down and touches the navel; near the navel is the hood of the serpentine coils of *kundalini*.

## 1

In the human body there are 72000 *nadis*; among them ten are the chief ones.

## 2

Among them (ten) there is one chief *nadi* full of power.

## 3

This one begins from the navel and goes upto the head upwards and downwards.

## 4

The *nadis* spread and ramify penetrating feet, hands, and hip, like the threads of a lotus stalk.

## 5

Like the sun's rays, these *nadis* ramify and spread about.

## 6

Verily these *nadis* spread throughout the body intertwining the bones and nerves. Their ramification (though invisible) is real.

## 7

They begin from the navel and are continued within the Omkara.

## 8

If you penetrate through the *nadis*, the beneficent Light seen there will surely give you liberation.

## 9

If you know the nature of the *nadis*, and if you be calm and self-composed, and then if you perceive the long Light, there indeed is Wisdom.

10

You will perceive Shiva concealed but inhering in every *nadi*, if you are able to realise it and if you are self-composed.

ii

### Control of Vital air Currents or Pranayama

1

Observe that *prana* arises in the *muladhara* centre, ends in eight-fold (currents) and manifests as twelve,

2

If you exhale air through right and left nostrils, you will obtain the grace of Hara.

3

Shut the nostrils by the finger and exhale in due measure, and in the Pooraka (the state of the breath being inhaled), you will realize Shiva.

4

If, during countless incarnations, you go on exhaling and inhaling as aforesaid, you will acquire in the end wisdom about the inner Nature.

5

Draw in the *pranic* current which dissipates itself in hair-like tubes, and fix it in without hard respiration (breathing in and out).

6

If you can be steady, equally both in inhalation and exhalation, the tongue forms the central point of the balance.

7

During stoppage of respiration, if you look within and meditate upon Shiva, the breath will stand steady like a beetle (self-poised on wing).

8

When you exhale, inhale and hold up breath, keep your head straight as a balance.

9

If you know the nature of respiration and be calm and self-composed, you will prolong your life.

10

If the outgoing breath be drawn in and harmonized, (you) will resemble Shiva. Stop the downgoing breath.

iii

### Regulation of Fire

1

If you see, fire-like, a flame at the base (Muladhara), you can cut off the bondage of (the cycle of) birth and death.

2

If, inside and outside the spinal cord, you feel alike a creeping sensation, you can get rid of the deceitful *malam*.

3

If you see inside a burning fire, even charcoal-like-body will become a radiant one.

4

If the fire inside become collected and focused, and if you feel a creeping sensation in the spinal cord, you will soon see it as white.

5

If you send a spark to the Muladhara, then your body will be of the flame-colour of the evening.

6

If you see fire inside the twenty-five the false five will go out i.e. the body will die.

7

If you see 50 and one as flame, the divine light will manifest itself.

8

If the induced fire be constantly realized without your feeling exhaustion, you can accomplish whatever you desire.

9

If, by mind, you control the fire within, and then feel a creeping sensation in the spinal cord by and by you will obtain liberation sure.

10

If you see inside intently the bright evening-like-flame that will turn out white.

*iv*

### Acquisition of Amrita

1

If you shut the passage of air out with the uvula and the tip of the tongue, and drink amrita at that place, you will become king of the Devas (Indra).

2

If you drink amrita which fills the 16 *kalas*, full moon will shine forth.

3

If you drink amrita in the pot-like-Omkara, you will know that there is no going away (Death).

4

If, in the same pot (head), you drink amrita with knowledge hunger for food will drop off.



5

If you can taste amrita oozing as your food, you can cut off the notorious birth.

6

If you can drink amrita with the help of the lamp of wisdom, you will become a true Shivayogi.

7

If you can drink amrita in the above (head) without intermission, you can cheat death.

8

If you can drink amrita when fire, evoked, by *pranayama* mixes with it (amrita) you will get wisdom.

9

If you drink amrita without limit and be in that ananda state (blissful state), you become the ancient primordial flame.

10

If you drink amrita filling up the moon region, you can move about in the mid air.

v

### Worship

1

The mode of worship of Hara of the macrocosm is to make the three zones unite and to make (that state) steady.

2

Have a proper sitting posture, worship Hara, make obeisance to Him within, and then internally unite with Him.

3

The mode of worship of the wise is internal; Manus is the altar, pure reason is the Shivalingam thereon.

4

In the six centres realise the form of Shiva, and kill out the sense of separateness, that is the method of worship.

*Avvaikural*, 14th century

Tr. by P. Narayana Ayer

## Selections

### KALLADANAR

KALLADAM is the name of a place in Tamil Nadu and the poet who was born there was named Kalladanar (Kallāḍanār, 12th century), who shares his name with a poet of the Sangam period. His work called *Kalladam* comprises a hundred poetic pieces, each purporting to depict a particular mood of love. This work is written in a peculiar style, the result of the author's forced attempt to revive the poetic forms and diction of the Sangam age. Kalladanar was fully acquainted with the Shaiva legends centering round Madurai, and he refers to the miracles wrought by Lord Shiva on account of some saints and poets. There is no definite evidence of the age of *Kalladam*. We may ascribe it to the 12th century or later.

Lady of locks black as massed night with *kuravai* flowers blooming ! We two one day wandering on a fiery desert path, chanced to be received as guests rare by wild women with shaggy hair, pale mouths and pendant breasts in their grass-thatched huts; and smiling at the skins they spread for us, we ate the flour meal they provided, and drank clear water we drew with gourd pitchers from the deep well, and listened to the ceaseless roar of the sea and lay, resting our heads on elephant tusks.

We enjoyed bliss supreme, to which there is no peer. But if peer there be, none other may be compared save the bliss of those who with lotus hearts opening under the radiance of His fragrant feet rest in Him, (the Lord who dwelleth in Kudal where Indra, king of the celestials, erected a temple and set up His gracious token that destroyeth rebirth), on that good day when as king of the Lunar race He wedded with holy rites performed by mighty Brahma the beautiful Lady of narrow brow and triple breast and ruled the world. (16)

My Lord who once cut asunder the perforated trunk of the charging elephant, spot-faced with sharp and deadly tusks like unto two crescent moons;

and leaped in and saved me as I sank in the big tarn with its murderous eyes feigned as blossoms of honey-petalled lilies; and mended it as before and uttered words of comfort when my long roped-swing that moves to and fro like unceasing death and birth, broke and I cried, -when on this midnight he cometh alone to me, like unto sight restored, O great moon who at the churning of the ocean wert born as ambrosia for the half female Lord (Arddhanarisa, a name of Shiva), who art one of His eight holy manifestations, who of His three eyes, as eye of grace duly shone, who beheld His peerless crown and feet, who sheddeth rays of light in abundance, purifying as the holy ashes, -to me, thy worshipper, there is a boon thou couldst graciously grant.

As each Kalai of thine shrinks and emerges in the thousand fire-rayed solar spear like as great men suppress all sense of I, and become meek and humble, who know the three-eyed Lord that uttered the first stanza in praise of saintly Valluvar, when following not the way of the philosophers he declared before the great assembly of poets (Sangam) the duties of this world and the essential meaning, of life—Him that in Kudal. with himself with the Lady and pervadeth all things—so too do thou suppress thyself.

Dear daughter of the lotus (thou who art like Lakshmi lotus-born), bend in loving worship unto this crescent moon that sheweth in the beauteous sky.

For it is the pure white curved tusk on the face of the star-studded sky-elephant, whose breath is the blowing wind, whose trickling must is the rain, whose side bells are the rising of the setting sun: for it is the boat on the celestial sea crowded with star fish beyond count: for it is the ship by which maidens cross the sea of love to join their Beloved : for it is the sugar-cane bow that Cupid, Lord of the five arrows, makes and bends to gladden maidens' hearts: to it was granted to be born with ambrosia in the milky sea when churned by Mal (Vishnu) and other Gods with all their might: it hath the high honour of reflecting in the heavens, as in a mirror, the lustre of thy lovely brow.

For if (the crescent moon) hath merit exceeding great, of bathing in the Ganges which, with twice five hundred mouths scooping the earth and with wrath unprecedented carrying confusion on every side, rests suppressed in the beautiful matted locks wreathed with golden clusters of *konrai* (Cassia) and *tali* and *aruku* and white petalled *crukkam*, *karanthai*, and *vanni*—of the Lord of the Dance throned in Kudal, where like Vishnu sleeping on the milky sea big dark clouds spread over white palaces and send down rain in showers.

For it hath been exalted to be a flower bud on His high crown of matted locks and so rid of its shame and stain.

Daughter of the lotus, bond in loving worship unto the crescent moon. (23)

Lady whose lovely brow vieth with the bow !

There is a lass who is my eye, my life and owneth all the happiness of my heart. With measureless love overflowing, she hath gone to bathe in the mountain tarn, which is the rut-hole of the mountain-elephant, the high mountain's wakened eye, the lovely white tilak-spot that for ever adorns the brow of the goddess of beauty-the mountain, the twin of the full ambrosial moon on a side lying and resting her feet worn with long journeying, honey-comb round whence the bees having departed, honey floweth like a water-fall, a chalice guarded by mountain nymphs to hold the ambrosia they quaff to keep their perpetual youth, the mirror wherein highland maidens with breasts so close-pressing that the breeze has no room to enter, see their little faces.

Is it the light of thee from afar, or the imagining of my unruly breast or is peerless beauty, nature's gift to those born in the world of Sura's foe (Skanda to whom the mountains are sacred) ? Apart from the confusion of my eyes that see thee as her, if thou wilt agree to wait a moment to recover from the fatigue that maketh thee sweat, at the moment thou thinkest to depart, she will arrive bright as a lamp that ever burneth untrimmed.

Then ye two in friendly intimacy like two Lakshmis born of the milky ocean, will together drive the gem-set swing in the spacious field, throw from the swing gems to bring down the honey-comb with its abounding honey, which fluttering like a white sheet rushes down with golden sands following the mountain caves, pick blue lilies that have opened in the big lake, climb the high lofts with ladders, drive away the parrot swarms that call to each other in the flowering green plots. The Lord who enjoyed the sport of burning with his smile the three far-famed cities of silver, gold and iron together with the Lady entered my heart, unseen by me, who heeded Him not, rooted out the old trees, murder and theft, destroyed the walls of birth, stood manifest in the hall of my heart, like the prosperity gained by those who have attained the feet of Him that standeth as the goal of freedom in the city of Kudal, the flowers in whose abounding groves fill with perfume the region of the celestials. (26)

Like battle-front of wielder of crooked sceptre, the sun's glory, changed and shrunk, hath duly set behind the hills.

Groups of birds on the lakes seek rest, as in cities diverse tongues of men are lulled.

The mullai and the wild jasmine, shedding fragrance around their petals open, as smiles the Lady of the Night, seeing the manner of maidens reeling under Cupid's arrows.

The fire of love enters the hearts of parted lovers; in the hearts of the wedded, ambrosia swells.

The nightingale, entering his roost on the palmyrah palm, bills and fondles his mate.

The chants of the holy Vedas are hushed in the Brahmin choir.

The hermits decline offerings of ripe fruit and roots.

The net-casting fishermen, with flowers and myrrh on breast and crown, raise on sea-drum rhythmic notes of *tuttam* and *kaikkilai*.

The red-lily, green-stalked, hath bloomed like water-nymphs opening their lips.

Dear twilight that comest with train of rosy light, tell me thy heart's thought. Showest thou unto the four-fold army's King and to the dewllers in his camp, even as thou showest unto me, rounding and taking capture of my soul like hosts of sin encompass them that worship not the three-eyed Lord Supreme who filleth with His Divine Grace the great city of Kudal (where for the happiness of all living things, he hath lovingly established mighty powers and harmonized divers science and the sacred letters of mystic Grace and the holy Vedas of Spirit lore and qualities detectable and forms of beauty rare, and the eight chief words in due order, eight and seven and six and five and four and the beauteous three and the deathless two and the one beyond words) and like unto the hearts of men who have not by life of renunciation or by duties of home, blossomed in wisdom and gained the goal.

From *Kalladam*, c.12th century

Tr. by Ponnambalam Arunachalam

## Six Thousand Units

### TIRUKKURUKAI PIRAN PILLAI

TIRUKKURUKAI PIRAN PILLAI was the son of Tirumalai Nambi who was the maternal uncle of Ramanuja. As a disciple of Ramanuja, Pillai learnt from him the significance of the teachings of Nammalvar. Ramanuja authorised Tirukkurukai Piran Pillai himself to compose an authoritative gloss on the Tiruvaymoli as taught and expounded by him. This commentary is known amongst the Vaishnavites as the Arayirappadi or the Six Thousand Units. One padi consists of 32 letters. This work is the earliest and, in some respects, the best commentary on the hymns of Tiruvaymoli.

[The alvar] says: You are so enjoyable that even if there were no difference between you and others, and everyone were to have equal experience of you for all time, it would still not exhaust your [glory]. By your

beauty and other incomparable auspicious attributes you have made even my material body melt. So extraordinary is your servant's passion for you, yet you remain inaccessible to me. I have seen you: you reclined, radiant and incredibly beautiful; in sacred Kutantai where fragrant, luxuriant [fields] of red paddy sway like fans, blowing a gentle breeze over rich water. [But] I did not see you graciously glance at me with your divine eyes, nor do I [hear] you graciously say even a word to me. (5.8.1)

My Lord, your form is opposed to all that is defiling and is entirely auspicious. By your divine beauty you captivate me and make me your servant. To protect those who seek your refuge you assume a desirable and suitable form, and are graciously born [in this world]. You are an extraordinary exalted flame. Even though all the lotus flowers in Tirukkutanti blossom, the lotus blossoms that are your sacred eyes do not open wide. What shall I do, asks [the alvar]. (5.8.2)

There is nothing that I can do, there is no goal other than you. Can I ever reach your sacred feet by my effort (yatna) ? Look at me with grace. I do not want anything but your sacred feet: [a privilege] that should be granted only by your mercy (kripa) and in no other way. So, for as long as this soul exists, graciously see that it is never separated from your sacred feet. (5.8.3)

In distress, I cry to see you who are a great ocean of unsurpassed, extraordinary, infinite, auspicious attributes. You can captivate all souls by your beauty and by your sacred body can make them your slaves. You recline in Tirukkutantai that prospers with virtuous people. [Saying] "Show yourself to me as you showed yourself to Sri Gajendra alvar. I scan the skies, weep, and bow [in worship]. (5.8.4)

I weep to see you, I bow down to see you, I dance to see you, I sing to see you, I shriek to see you, and still I do not see you come. Not seeing you I stand ashamed, looking at the people of this world who say evil [things] about you, and I think this is because of my sins. O Lord who reclines in Kutantai amidst the fertile, bounteous fields, [Lord] with red lotus eyes, graciously think of a way for me to reach your sacred feet. (5.8.5)

You must banish my bondage and provide the means (upaya) for me to reach your sacred feet. While you do it, you must make sure that knowing about the upaya I do not get caught in it. Do it so that I do not know it is an upāya. Since [the alvar] does not see [the Lord] fulfill his desires, he says, "Knowing the great enjoyment of union with your sacred feet, you who

have a host of infinite, auspicious attributes like affection to your devotees, perfect conduct, accessibility and enjoyability, I am only enjoying these earthly objects through my corrupting sense organs. How much longer am I to be away from your sacred feet ? (5.8.6)

Through your grace, you showed me your beauty and graciously made me one whose soul's only delight is to serve you, now I cannot serve even for a moment if I am to be separated from you so first give me your sacred feet and later remove my bondage. (5.8.7)

The [alvar] says: Perhaps you may destroy my sorrow, perhaps you may not. Do as your divine will pleases; I have no other refuge but you. It is to banish my sorrow that you lift aloft the sacred discus and that you recline in Tirukkutantai ! So, before my body becomes weak and my soul falters, before this soul ceases to exist, graciously, quickly, rescue me to your sacred feet. (5.8.8)

Telling me that this soul is only your slave, you made me one whose happiness and sadness [is incumbent] on [my] union and separation with your twin feet. Though those feet are served by your commander in chief [i.e., VishVaaksena], the leader of Shesha and Garuda, and by countless divine attendants, and though you are the Lord of all, you came to sleep [in image form] in sacred Kutantai so that you may be the refuge of all. O come [Lord], so I may see you ! (5.8.9)

You come not to elate my eyes but to appear to [in] my heart; showing your exceedingly beautiful body, you became extremely beautiful to me; no one else but you could destroy the obstacles to my finding all my enjoyment with you; [since] you graciously entered Tirukkutantai to make me an object of [your grace], why do I who have been your servant still wander? (5.8.10)

Those who are capable of [reciting], till their confusion clears, these ten verses of the thousand, sweeter than the sounds of the divine flute played by the Lord of beautiful Dwaraka, said by Kurukur Catakopan who considers as his way and his goal the flower [like] feet of the Lord whose sole pleasure is to expel the enemies of his devotees, will become enjoyable to the Lord just as the lovers of doe-eyed women are enjoyable to them. (5.8.11)

[The alvar says]: You have compassion, motherly love, and countless other infinite, wonderful, auspicious qualities. By your radiance you hold up the entire world as your body and you are my sustainer. You dwell in the highest heaven, which is removed from our sense organs, [but] came to this sacred

hill, which is an ornament for the entire world, and graciously stand there in order to become accessible to our senses. I am your servant and come from a family of [people] who have been your servants. For all these reasons, you must unite me with your feet. (6.10.1)

If the Lord says, only when the sins which are obstacles disappear can one obtain union with me [the alvar replies]: Just as you, with your sacred discus destroyed the demons (asuras) who were the enemies of the divine ones, who are your devotees, please destroy the obstacles which [stand between us]. Graciously make it happen that, I, your servant, who am submerged in the ever-increasing, swelling flood of divine desire for all that is connected with you, may reach your sacred feet that stand on the sacred hill; the hill that is adorned and made brilliant by the rays emanating from the clusters of sun-lit lotuses that spring daintily from willow stalks. (6.10.2)

If you ask, should this be done without cause, [the alvar] says: While there are the "never-tiring immortals" for you to unite with, by sheer grace (kevala kripa), with your exceedingly attractive, wonderous, divine form that is similar to a dark cloud, you came, entered, filled my heart, and became very sweet to me. Similarly, again, by your grace, my Lord, graciously make me reach your sacred feet which stand on the sacred hill that is made so splendid with delightful, clear waterfalls and streams flowing with treasures of pure, radiant, diverse gems, gold, and pearls. (6.10.3)

He petitions: You were unable to tolerate the suffering of the world when it was assaulted by the merciless demons. So you rained fiery arrows that burnt the bodies of the demons and you saved the world from their oppression. Similarly, by your grace, make my sorrows vanish by providing an unparelled means (upaya) meant only for me to reach your exceedingly enjoyable sacred feet. You abide with your consort on the sacred hill that is even desired by the eternal ones. Through this means, graciously enable me to join you. (6.10.4)

It is asked, can a suitable means be adopted successfully, even if there is no precedent for it? he says: By one sacred arrow you felled the seven trees that were like mountains, such that the mountains and nether regions [shook] in fear. Is there anything that you cannot do? The other day you went between the two trees without harm, banished my fear, and gave me life. So when will you make me reach your feet and give me life? You graciously stand on the sacred hill which is the refuge of all beings, with innumerable divine weapons, starting with Shri Saranga the bow; these weapons are capable of banishing (the fears) of all your devotees. (6.10.5)



If you should ask, is it not the goal of everyone to do all kinds of service to the Lord of all who lives in the highest heaven. [the alvar answers]: Even the "never-tiring immortals" who live there ardently wonder, "when is the day when we see the sacred feet of the Lord of Tiruvenkata?" So they flock here and by thought, word, and deed do every kind of service at your sacred feet. That is also my goal so, [tell me] when is the day that I, who eagerly want to come to the sacred hill, can really come here and serve your sacred feet with all my senses, for all time ? (6.10.6)

If you say, we can only obtain this goal by performing an upaya, the alvar says: In spite of being surrounded by the supreme angels in the highest heaven, you graciously mounted on the shoulders of Garuda, [whose picture] is on your victorious flag and whose essential nature is to expel the enemies of your devotees, you came to the sacred hill on his shoulder, for my sake; you banished all the hindrances on my side [that were barriers to our union]; you graciously came into my heart and through [showing me] the beauty of your coral-like lips, you conquered even me who craved worldly pleasures and made me your servant. You gave me the joy of contemplating you continuously, without break, because [you knew] that my soul could not bear to survive if it was separated from you even for a moment. And since I cannot survive unless I see you, graciously show yourself to me, even though I have not performed my upaya.

(6.10.7)

If it is asked, can you, who are without any upaya, attain [the goal] just by desiring it ? [the alvar] says: The intelligent Shiva, Brahma, Indra, and other divine beings come with their families and get to see you, only because they desire it. They say that even though they have no upaya, they cannot survive unless they see you. [The alvar] pleads: you must come to me so that I may envision you for all time. I, who am your servant, have not been able to see you and am confused and dazed because of my grief. If you do not want [to remain before me [forever], could you at least come immediately and manifest yourself [briefly], just as you did to Shri Gajendra, to make me survive ?

(6.10.8)

You seem accessible to your enemies and yet [actually] you are very difficult [for them] to see. To your devotees you seem so distant, and yet you are so accessible. You made me one for whom your beauty is sustenance, nourishment, and enjoyment. You graciously stand, [just] for me, on the sacred hill, which is adorned by gems, that emanate brilliant rays, transforming night into day. I will not be separated from your sacred feet even for a minute. For all these reasons, you must, by your mercy (kripa), make me, your servant, join your sacred feet.

(6.10.9)

To all those who have the sole desire of rendering loving service and who take refuge at his sacred feet, he gives the wealth of loving service. His devotees seek as their refuge these sacred words concerning the sacred hill, which are spoken in order to reach this incomparable Lord of Tiruvenkata, who is characterized by motherly love. Even those who take refuge with these devotees will be crowned in the kingdom of the servants of God in heaven, and will be fortunate in being able to render service of all kinds, at all times. (6.10.10)

From *Arayirappadi*, 12th century

Tr. by John Curman and  
Vasuda Narayanan

## The Kalinga War

JAYANKONTAR

JAYANKONTAR (Jayankontār 12th century) was the poet-laureate of Kulottunga Cholan I. Using all his poetic talents, he tries to portray the battle-field in *Kalingattu Parani*, which is about the victorious battle of Kulottunga Cholan I on the Kalinga land. The chieftain of the Chola army, Karunakara Thondaiman, showed his prowess in the battle. *Parani* is one of the prolific heroic genres in Tamil. It is one of the most widely practised prabandha forms even today.

The subject matter of *Parani* is horror of the battle. The poet uses this technique to eulogize the hero, by recording his lineage and adding some supernatural scenes in which the devils, demons, goblins and fields dance and delight by making gruel out of human flesh.

Now shall we speak of the Goddess  
Kali's greatness; worship the  
inferior deities and ever  
cling to Her holy feet. (134)

There appear fiends like vessels  
in which hunger is packed;  
Emaciated they look from  
being hungry for many days.  
Dark, tall and thick palmyra  
groves look like the hands  
and legs of the fiends. (135)

Argue they with sturdy caves—  
their mouths are bigger than the caves—  
Like their mouths are their

bellies which no amount  
food can ever fill;  
While sitting, their knees go five  
feet higher than their faces. (136)

The fire of hunger  
has burnt off their flesh,  
only bones and nerves  
remain; their bones, like pieces  
of wood, are tied with  
the thread of nerves. Their  
bodies appear like firewood  
whose upper layers remain  
unburnt; complain they  
to the Goddess; "We don't  
get food for our bellies  
in the battlefield. Are you  
just in making us work?" (137)

Their two cheeks turn hollow  
and touch each other.  
The fiends look like hills;  
their hollow eyes, appear like  
caves; shine eyes like fire-brands. (138)

Burnt and dried up are their backs  
and look like the upturned  
bottoms of boats. Appear navels  
like an ant-hill's single hole  
into which serpents and double-  
tongued lizards can enter and sleep. (139)

All over their bodies hang  
long thick dark and curved hair  
like snakes. Deposited in  
their nostrils is the age-old  
moss. In their two ear-holes owls  
have already inhabited.  
So loitering here and  
there are bats without  
finding a place for rest. (140)

The fiends' teeth look like the leaf-

shaped blades of hoes and ploughs  
 joined in successive alternation.  
 Strung are lizards in their snake-like  
*tali*<sup>1</sup>-thread. Shattered their heads the sky;  
 Hang down their lips touching their breasts. (141)

On sighting the bamboo nearby  
 cry the child-fiends; "My mother,  
 My mother!" On seeing the camels  
 approaching them exclaim the mother  
 fiends: "You are like our children"  
 and lift them to their hips. (142)

Bestow rains food on people;  
 also gives the beggars gold.  
 Driven by the tiger-flag  
 Of Kulothunga the First  
 Flees and hides in the desert  
 the fish-flag of the Pandyan.  
 Inflicts the unbearable hunger  
 of the fiends as much  
 pain as the desert does. Singed  
 therefore is the skin of the fiends. (143)

Saying: "We are on the verge of  
 death," and cupping their palms  
 worship the fiends Kali  
 and stay always close to Her. (144)

The enraged elephants  
 of Kulothunga the First  
 His enemy soldiers killed.  
 Broke in the battlefield  
 the brains of his rival kings.  
 Slip the fiends in the mire  
 of the shattered brains and  
 get one of their legs broken. (145)

Cooked the fiends their thick  
 gruel in the battlefield

where Kulothunga I fought.  
 Treated they the white teech  
 of the dead soldiers as rice.  
 Put they the teeth in a mortar,  
 pounded them with an elephant's  
 tusk as a ricestamper  
 The pestle then fell and  
 rendered their right hands lame. (146)

Struck Kulothunga I terror  
 in the hearts of kings whose banners  
 bore victory symbols. Defeated  
 he once his rival king in  
 Chakkarak kottam. Cooked the fiends  
 porridge with the spilt blood and  
 fatty intestines of the fallen  
 soldiers. The hot thick gruel  
 spilled over and blinded one  
 of the eyes of the fiends. (147)

Brought they Kaveri alluvial soil  
 to the realm of Kulothunga I  
 Him fiends blessed in the Madurai  
 battlefield. Cooked they a tasty  
 pap. Their inexorable hunger  
 made them drink the steaming gruel. It  
 shrivelled their tongues and made them dumb. (148)

Even as a boy Kulothunga I  
 wore *aimpatait tali*<sup>1</sup>  
 used his cavalry to defeat  
 the elephantry of the rival  
 at Thimiri. On hearing  
 his soldiers' tumultuous  
 roar against their enemies,  
 the fiends turned deaf. (149)

Prior to the defeat of the  
 Pandyan by Kulothunga I  
 ran female goblins errands  
 for the Pandyans, Abducted

1. Ornament made of bow, sword, club, conch and wheel and worn round the neck by the young.

the fiends all these goblins  
and made them their wives.  
Their offspring turned out  
to be dwarf fiends.

(150)

In the battle at Kadaram  
ran the beheaded soldiers' blood  
as a flood. As the fiends  
swam in the flood of blood  
became bent their backs and  
afflicted were they with a  
disease called *Kurakku vatam*<sup>1</sup>

(151)

Registered Kulothunga I  
victories in Lanka and  
Madurai. The fiends who  
were cooking then their fingers  
opened out to swim in the ocean.

*Kalingattu Parani*, 12th century

Tr. by P. Parameswaran

## The Victory Procession

### OTTAKKUTTAR

OTTAKKUTTAR (Ottakküttar, 12th century) is an eminent poet of the Chola regime. He has the distinction of having been court poet for three generations: in the courts of (i) Vikkrama Cholan (1128-1135), (ii) Kulottunga Cholan II (1135-1150) and (iii) Raja Raja Cholan II (1146-1173). On these three kings he composed separate *Ula* poems, which are collectively called *Moovarula*.

His contemporaries are Avvaiyar and Pukalenti Pulavar. Many legends shroud over the relationship of Ottakkuttar and Pukalenti; they had scholastic rivalry and it was often reconciled by Avvaiyar. Legends also appear over his power and prowess among his contemporaries; the reason is that his poems are always lauded for their pun and fun.

Apart from *Moovarula*, he also wrote *Thakkayakapparani*, *Arumbai Tollayiram*, *Nalayirakkovai*, *Kulottunga Cholan Pillai amil*. The last and seventh Kantam of Ramayanam, the *Utharakandam*, is said to be composed by Ottakkuttar.

*Ula* is one of the traditional genres. It means "procession". The poet sings the glory of the god of the hero while he is in procession. The poet makes fine and

1. Disease usually affecting monkeys.

tender descriptions of the feelings of the women-folk who are gazing at the hero in the procession. In this genre the beauty of the women-folk, the prowess of the hero and the majestic movement of the procession, with all its rhythmic musical events; are described fantastically.

The excerpt given here is from *Moovarula*, (Ula of three kings) and this piece is particularly about Vikkrama Cholan.

### A Lass

#### 1

This lass around ten is a waxing moon,  
A just emerging tender sprout,  
A young and featherless peahen;  
A formidable weapon of future  
To vanquish the god of love  
Who was burnt by Lord Shiva's fury once!

#### 2

Like the cute chicks of the cuckoo bird,  
Like the nestlings of swan and parrot  
And like the budding branch of a tender creeper  
She's a little maiden with sparkling eyes!  
Sweet as honey-drops! This kid that clings  
To her mother's apron strings!

#### 3

Deer, parrots, peacocks, swans, all her pets.  
She took along with her dolls.  
With the pearls of Pugar port and Nagai town  
Many a skilful game she played.  
And with the pearls of Korkai port as rice  
A mark-belief cooking she played in the street.

#### 4

Like a thunderbolt the drum beats announced  
Heralding Vikrama Chola's victorious advent,  
A king who routed hunger and ills  
Womenfolk thronging there saluted him  
And sang sonnets in his praise!

This tender girl too followed suit!

5

The sun or the moon is no match  
To this king's dazzling crown!  
But at that, she didn't even glance!  
His scintillating eyes or sunny smile  
Emanating from his rosy lips  
Could not steel her heart!

6

Neither his broad shoulders and manly figure  
Nor his commanding eye-brows  
Nor even his well-shaped muscles  
Could ever charm this girl!  
But her mind and eyes were fixed  
At the alluring garland of the King!

7

"O mother, come here and get me  
The king's garland!" she prayed.  
"See, we need not fear our king!  
We shall indeed pray for your sake!  
But, is it so easy to get?  
Mind you, girl, it is very hard!" they said.

8

Shocked at this, the girl wept  
And her tears wet her chest!  
Does it portend what is in store?  
That her wooing age is not too far?  
All her erstwhile pranks and games  
She gave up once for all!

### A Girl in Her Early Teens

9

Presenting her childish lips to her parrot pet



She gained the dulcet notes of a flute!  
Her teeth's radiance she gifted to lily buds  
And got the glow of pearls instead!  
Her timid gaze she left to her darling deer  
And dart-like glances, her eyes acquired!

## 10

The creeper's grace of her erstwhile days  
Becomes now the lightning's dazzle!  
Abandoning the toys of her tender days  
Parrot and Mynah she holds in her hands.  
The charming cygnet's walk of yester-years  
Changed into sure-footed she-elephant's gait.

## 11

Her feminine form glitters like gold  
And superb coif glints with pearls!  
The love-god is furious at her rosy lips  
That can bewitch even holy souls!  
Her breasts look like flower buds  
Her svelte neck bettered the betelnut palm!

## 12

Rising from bed on her own accord  
And strolling awhile, she muttered,  
"O, mother, I saw in my dream last night  
A creeper full of buds and flowers  
Hug the sturdy branch of a massive tree  
And rested there in romantic glee!

## 13

"I heard the humming sound of the honey bees  
And felt the fragrance fill that place  
I rejoiced at the sight!" Her mother heard this  
And said, "Come, my dear! Kiss your mother!  
With your graceful figure, I wish you win  
The lotus hand of the Chola King!".

14

Then the drums heralded the arrival  
Of the valiant King Vikrama  
Who rode on a hill-like elephant!  
In the corridor of a skyscraper  
This peerless beauty with her pals emerged  
Like the dazzling flash of lightning!

15

This king who saved his realm from countless ills  
And ruled for long! As the monarch moved,  
The girl swallowed his shining eyes and lips,  
His masculine frame and lotus palm,  
Which planted his banner in the Himalayas once!  
Her eyes never strayed from his handsome frame!

16

Her mind fixed at him, her hands worshipped,  
No way could she find to detract her mind!  
When this chief who routed Chera and Pandya Kings  
Went out of her sight, stealing her heart,  
The love-lorn maid stood there all alone  
With sagging hair-do and shattered spirit!

17

Since it's her maiden experience,  
The love-god wanted to steal this chance.  
And shoot his mighty lance!  
But, as he thought of her tender age  
And mind and features half-mature,  
He changed his mind and slipped away!

*Vikkiramacholan Ula*, 12th century

Tr. by M.S. Venkatachalam and  
M.S. Nadar

## Twelve Sutras

### MEYKANDAR

The story of the great Saint MEYKANDAR (Meykandār 13th century) runs like this:

Achutak Kalappalar, a Vellala of Pennadagam had no children for a long time. His guru Sakalagama Panditar advised him to go to Tiruvenkadu, to take bath in the Mukkulam and worship Shiva. It was a belief that those who bathed and worshipped Shiva there would have their wishes fulfilled soon. Kalappalar with his wife went there and did so and in due time his wife gave birth to a child. This child in his third year was initiated by Paranjoti and was given the name Meykandar, which means, "one who has seen the truth". He preached the philosophy of Shaiva Siddhanta to his followers, of whom his father's own guru, Sakalagama Panditar, was one. His work *Shivajnanabodham* (Śivajñābōdham) contains the 12 sutras given below.

## 1

Because the world, consisting of things male, female, and neuter, is subject to the three operations, production, maintenance, and dissolution, it is an entity produced (by an agent). Having dissolved, it comes into being again because of Impurity. The end is the beginning, say the wise.

## 2

He, being one with souls and other than souls, abides in inseparable union with the Power, so that souls experience going and coming because of the two-fold work.

## 3

By saying that it is not, by saying "my body", by knowledge of the five senses, by knowledge when they are suppressed, by the absence of feeling and activity in sleep, by knowing when caused to know, (it is proved that) there is a soul in the body which is an instrument produced by Maya.

## 4

The soul is not one of the inner faculties. But being without knowledge owing to Innate Impurity, it is associated with them like a king with his ministers, and has five states.

## 5

Though body, mouth, eye, nose (and ear) perceive with the help of the soul, they do not know. Like them, souls (though , they know), by the grace

of the Peerless One, in their knowing (do not know). They are like iron in the presence of magnet.

6

If He is knowable, He is non-real; if He is unknowable, He is non-existent. Therefore the truly wise say that He is neither, but is spiritual reality, knowable and unknowable.

7

In the presence of the real all things are non-existent; so the real does not know (them). The non-real is not; so it cannot know (the real). (Therefore) that which knows both is the soul which is neither.

8

When, because of the soul's meritorious practices, the Primal One enlightens the soul as a guru also, saying, "Brought up among savages, the five senses, you have lost consciousness (of your true estate)', the soul leaves them and, being not other (than Hara), reaches Hara's feet.

9

Let the soul by spiritual vision discover the Lord in its own consciousness—the Lord who cannot be known by imperfect knowledge and sense-perception. When the soul abandons the world of sense as a quickly passing mirage, the Lord becomes cool shade (for it). It will ponder over the Five Letters in the manner prescribed.

10

When the soul, having become one (with the Lord), even as the Lord is one with the soul, abides in the Lord's service, powerful Karma and Mala and Maya pass away.

11

Like the soul which makes the seeing eye see—in order that the soul may

see, the Lord sees, and makes the souls see. Therefore in unforgetting love the soul reaches the feet of Hara.

12

When having washed away the Impurity which prevents it reaching the sustaining Feet that are like a red lotus flower, and having joined the company of those who love the Lord, the soul is rid of delusion, it worships, as Hara Himself, the habit of those who abound in devotion, and His shrines.

From *Shivajnanabodham*, 13th century

Tr. by Gordon Mathews

## The Measures of Knowledge

ARULNANDI SHIVACHARYAR

Tradition says ARULNANDI SHIVACHARYAR (Arulnandi Sivacāryar, 13th century) was the family preceptor of Meykandar and was known as Sakalagama Panditar on the basis of his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Vedas, Agamas and Tirumurais. He went to his disciple's residence one day. There Meykandar was explaining *anavamala* to his followers. Looking at him Arulnandi, with his superior airs, asked, "Can you define Anava?" (The term *anavamalam* means the Ego and ignorance enveloping the soul.) Meykandar did not utter even a single word, but just pointed his forefinger at the questioner himself. This proved to be an initiation and the family preceptor became a disciple of Meykandar. There is no evidence to prove the story. But it is quite conceivable that even an erudite scholar has to await the darshan of the Guru to get realization.

*Shivanjanana Siddhiyar* (Sivajñāna Siddhiyār) is the work of Arulnandi Shivacharyar which is an exposition of Meykandar's *Shivajnanabodham*.

1

Some say that the means of valid knowledge are six in number: Perception, Inference, Testimony, Non-cognition, Presumption and Comparison. Others add four more to the list: Inference by Elimination, Probability, Tradition and Identity. Others still add more to these ten. All these means of knowledge (though valid) can be reduced to three viz. Perception, Inference and Testimony.

2

Valid perception is the immediate apprehension (of the intelligence of

the self) of objects without doubt or error, having (first before it) an indeterminate awareness (of them). (Valid) inference is the process by which such objects which are not immediately apprehended can be similarly known (to the intelligence of the self) through the help of the middle term which invariably co-exists with them. Verbal Testimony consists in the similar knowing (of the self's intelligence) of such objects as are not cognizable by these means of knowledge (through reliable authority).

3

The Indeterminate knowledge is the awareness (of the intelligence of the self) of the here being of the object undifferentiated (by name etc.) Doubt is the conflicting apprehension of a thing (which is known in an undefined way), Error is the mistaken apprehension of one thing for another (similar in form). Determinate knowledge is the determination (of the self's intelligence) of name, universal attribute, action and the substance of a thing (corresponding to the reality).

4

Perception is of four kinds; Sensory perception, Mental perception, Introspection and the Extra-sensory (yogic) perception. Inference is of two kinds. Inference of oneself and Inference of others. Testimony is classified into three kinds; *mantra*, *tantra* and *upadesha*. The objects knowable by these means of knowledge are of two natures: general and specific.

5

(Of these two natures), that which is non-pervasive alike of other genres and of its own genus and is unique itself that is the (specific or) natural state of a thing. The general or relative state of a thing on the other hand is those features which it has in common with other species of its own genus but which are non-pervasive of other genres. When objects are known through perception and other means, they are knowable in terms of either of these two natures only.

6

The intelligence of the self, oriented towards the object pervades the sensory channel, light (and other sense-data) and form (and other unmanifest

elements immanent in the sense-data) and apprehends without doubt or error, without determination of name etc., the objects in their bare being. This is *sensory perception*. Such a perceptual content revived (in the *chitta*) without being forgotten is organized and made determinate and valid without any error through (the concepts of) name etc. as a result of the operation of the principle of Intellect. This determinate cognition (of the intelligence of the self turned outward) is the *mental perception*.

## 7

The feeling of pleasure and pain experiences which are the manifestations of *sattva* and other qualities and which follow in the train of one's mental perception are brought home to Finite Agent through the operation of the principle of *raga* etc. The awareness (of the self's intelligence) of such experiences is *introspective perception*. The *extra-sensory* or *yogic perception* consists in thwarting the obscuring *mala* through the *yoga samadhi* and comprehending things of all place and all times by remaining seated at one place at one time.

## 8

Inferential cognition of (the self's intelligence) in the form of examining in different propositions the major as characterized by one of the three middles or *probans* in respect of their universal relation of concomitance, is *inference of oneself*. *Inference for others* consists in explaining at length the proof to others. Such an explanation is divided into two, viz. *positive and negative inferences*.

## 9

The Propositions (used in reference) or *pakshas* are of three kinds: *Paksha*, *Sapaksha* and *Vipaksha*. *Paksha* is the simple statement of the major comprising the predicate. *Sapaksha* is the statement of example of the positive instances of concomitance between the middle and the major, *Vipaksha* expresses the negative concomitance between the middle and the major terms. The two (beginning with *Paksha*) are methods of agreement to infer the existence of a thing while the last one is a method of difference to infer its non-existence.

## 10

The *probans* or *hetu* (used in Inference) is of three kinds; *sahaja hetu*,

*karya hetu* and *anupalabdhi hetu*. *Sahaja hetu* or the *probans* of identity consists in identifying tree etc., through the help of words like *mango tree* (which have their denotative functions in their own capacity). *Karya hetu* or the *probans* of casual relation consists in admitting the effect smoke to indicate the cause fire. When from the absence of cold we infer that there will be no dew we have an instance of *anupalabdhi hetu* or the *probans* of non-cognition (consisting in inferring the non-existence of an effect due to non-existence of its cause).

11

Because of smoke there is fire, like the hearth: thus expressing a relationship of co-presence is positive concomitance. "Where there is no fire there is no smoke, as in the case of a tank" thus expressing a relationship of co-absence is negative concomitance. These two modes of expressing an Inference are also further elaborated into the forms of five-membered syllogisms.

12

Perceptual inference is inferring a flowering bud (which is perceivable) from (the *probans* of) its fragrance. Conceptual inference is inferring the measure of one's wisdom (and such other things which are only conceivable in thought) from (the *probans* of) their words etc. Inference of testimony or *Agama Anumana* is (as differently from these) inferring (for instance) that if our past acts of good and evil are but our past efforts, similar efforts here taken will bear their fruits in the hereafter.

13

Testimony is the Vedas and Agamas (comprising *Karma Upasana* and *Jnana* portions); of the Eternally Pure Intelligent Being. Tantra (aspect of Testimony) treats of the (ritual) observances (in the *Karma*-portion) performed without any inner contradictions. *Mantras* treat of (the *Upasana* portion with respect to) controlling the mind etc., and contemplating the God in worship. *Upadesha* treats of (the *Jnana*-portion dealing with) the nature of the Supreme one without Beginning or End.

14

Here the Fallacies relating to the minor are four in number and those of



reasoning three, which when further subdivided number twenty-one. Fallacies of comparison are eighteen. The vulnerable points in arguments are of two classes and total on the whole twenty-two. Thus all put together the Inferential Fallacies are Sixty-five in number.

From *Shivajnana Siddhiyar*, 13th century

Tr. by K. Sivaraman

## The Story of Nala

### PUKALENTI

PUKALENTI (Pukaḷēnti, 13th century) was one of the court poets of a Chola King and was a contemporary of Ottakuttar. He was born in Ponvilainta Kalattur in Tontaimantalam. Chandran Swarki, the titular ruler of Murani, patronized him and at his request he composed *Nalavenpa* (Naḷaveṇṇpa). Pukalenti has mentioned his name in a few places in his immortal epic.

*Nalavenpa* is the story of Nala written in 424 *venpa* verses. The story of Nala has been retold by Pukalenti as well as by Ativeera Rama Pantiyan. Among these two, the former is more popular.

Who all day long to all world  
on heaven's high stage displays power,  
And to the ritual chant of priests  
performs his solemn dance of hour  
Makes his last bow, as instant Night  
draws o'er the empty stage in haste  
Her curtain starry-laced.

Fanfare on tuberoses-trumpets blowing  
a troop of golden beetles ride,  
As 'neath the guard of Cupid's bow  
mysterious Evening in his pride,  
Like a fairy prince, his shoulders swathed  
in swaying jasmine-garlands sweet,  
Comes tripping on fairy feet.

(88)

As when two kings, th' aggressor and  
defender, muster their array,  
Each pauses to survey his past  
and fearful for his future pray,  
So halts 'twixt day and night the hour

of tender memories and tears  
And lonely lovers' fears (89)

While Evening mocks her gay green gyves,  
Love's manacles, and blows a kiss,  
The crescent Moon grows mad to see  
twin bows more purely-arched than  
Her gemmy breasts in his silver gleams  
flash lightning, blaze with volcanic fire  
Those mountains of desire; (90)

Who bends his pale cold rays to dim  
the jewelled constellations there,  
Their brilliance in himself reflecting  
anon glows radiant; in despair  
His horrid horns as high as he rides  
tear up the dark with double thrust  
Like a mad bull the dust. (91)

### Night

A summer lightning, summer dew  
Soft fall'n, a light wind in the leaves,  
Are terrors to a mind distraught;  
'Ye swans! sweet rest be yours,' she grieves,  
If I the dread tempestuous night  
Survive, a miracle confess  
And my good fortune bless. (92)

'Ye maidens all whose virgin breasts  
released from their silken bonds  
Half-veil'd in ebon locks unbound  
are chalices of beaten bronze !  
Oh ! tell me not the expanse above  
blistered with cosmic passion's fire  
Is but the planets' quire. (93)

'All flowery groves, all forest glades  
are Love's luxuriant armoury;  
The sky his chariot's broad highway,  
his flag the myriad-spangled sea;  
When all the world's his hunting-ground,  
ye bards ! how can your tale be true  
That Shiva Cupid slew ? (94)

'What poison pulses in my veins  
     this livelong Night sans shame, sans, ruth?  
 That horned jewel in her ear  
     Must be some monstrous serpent's tooth.  
 Why must I toss in fevered trance,  
     all deaf to mortal colloquy  
 In fond soliloquy? (95)

'Oh, whence hath his fell Night sucked up  
     the heat she breathes upon my brow?  
 Is't from the bright moon riding high?  
     or from the engulfed sun below?  
 Or hath she from a thousand breasts  
     absorbed the heat of our desire  
 Who languish in love's fire? (96)

'Must all the ages be unrolled  
     between the sunset and the dawn?  
 And like the restless sea this night  
     Ne'er cease, the cock ne'er crow this morn?  
 Thus wrapt in musing melancholy  
     she wore the weary hours away  
 And waited for the day. (97)

'Oh, tell me why about my head  
     the striped night-flying beetles play.  
 Am I a lone night-lily sweet  
     bright with the bursting buds of May?  
 Fainting my tortured frame replies,  
     Call me a frail pomegranate-shoot  
 Bowed down with uberous fruit. (98)

'Who forged thy fierce artillery?  
     Who filled, O Moon! thy silver quiver?  
 At whose behest thy silver shafts  
     O'erwhelm me like a silver river?  
 Who weighted night's swift wings with lead  
     and made her course so slow, so slow,  
 But the Lord of the silver bow?' (99)

Wing upon wing, Love's holocaust,  
     with moon for candle and night for priest,

The night-moths, scorched in passion's flame,  
     swoon on the alter of her breast,  
 Where one by one for every sigh  
     the jasmine white and the roses red  
 Their shrivelled petals shed. (100)

In mortification unprofessed  
     the maid, Love's conscript devotee,  
 All listless tends the fire divine,  
     yet worships in her agony;  
 Couched on her hand the tear-dewed cheek,  
     rapt lies the votaress; all awry  
 The rueful bangles lie. (101)

And now no moon; but Night alone;  
     and Darkness broods o'er all the land,  
 Dark that a man may grasp in hand,  
     dark, nor yields to the flaming brand,  
 Dark as the dark of a harlot's heart,  
     Love's gaudy-gilded altar-tomb  
 That lures men to their doom. (102)

Midnight—beneath the palace-wall  
     the swart stout-belted warders come,  
 The city watch, with lusty shout  
     and rat-tat-tat of kettledrum;  
 The clash of sword, the thump of lance,  
     with hammer-clang-on-anvil smite  
 The echoing wall of night. (103)

The yawning tusker in his stall,  
     the lute relax'd in her shallow crypt  
 The drowsy bees in petalled cell  
     into Sleep's gentle arms have slipt;  
 Beneath all mortal eyelids Sleep  
     slips soft and softly folds his wings—  
 But here no balm he brings. (104)

Midnight—the vampire-sprites of hell,  
     their hideous hands upon their prey,  
 Pause gloating, and with sudden dread  
     shriek, shudder, shrink, and fade away;

All foul fiends fear that midnight hour,  
 auspiciousest for every prayer  
 But lone lovers' despair. (105)

'Tis said the andril-bird alone  
 to shield his gentle mate from harm  
 With one eye sleeps and one eye wakes,  
 his nest secure from all alarm.  
 Nor Damayanti for her love  
 nor Nalan for his leman's sight  
 One eyelid closed that night. (106)

### Damayanti

"What cauldron can thus generate  
 miasma foul and fetid murk?  
 What if, black-wing'd upon the gloom,  
 a fierce fire breathing monster lurk  
 Oh for thy massy arm, my love!  
 to save me from the ravening jaw  
 And dreadful dragon's maw. (107)

"Now, all exhausted as I lie,  
 round me the chilly dawn-wind swoops;  
 As when a delicate garden-plant  
 in a late-lingering autumn droops  
 Bee-drain'd to the dregs, in her distress  
 one cool breath of a snow-kiss'd air  
 The frail bract winnows bare." (108)

A sculptured column seems to stir  
 in that vague twilight's dim deceit;  
 With rapture from her couch she starts  
 and hastens unashamed to greet  
 Her lover—and staggering  
 clasps in her fond confusion  
 The inexpressive stone. (109)

Back to her chamber she returns,  
 flings down in wan, worn weariness  
 The heaving breasts, the burning brow;  
 disordered lies the braided tress  
 That o'er the snowy coverlet spreads  
 like a lone palm-tree's sable shadow  
 Across a moonlit meadow. (110)

"Oh ! has the Night so spent her strength  
in hate tormenting me forlorn,  
That now she has no strength to rise  
and lift the curtain of the dawn ?  
Or has she set her love on me,  
a royal favour costly-kind  
That may not be declined ? (111)

Like one who dozes half-awake  
and knows not if she slept or no,  
Upon her tumbled couch she tosses  
or idly paces to and fro;  
Anon she thrills with hope, anon  
in agony of doubt she weeps—  
Till with the dawn she sleeps. (112)

O Night! who all the world's wide ways  
O'ershadowest like a mighty tree,  
An ancient banyan from whose head  
a hundred roots hang gloomfully,  
When men or devils lose their way,  
or lovers in thy mazes stray,  
To what god shall they pray ? (113)

### Sunrise

Now lily-buds all their fingers fold  
and Brahmins fold their hands to prayer;  
Now ape the lotus-blossoms fair  
and mortal eyelids everywhere;  
Now Damayanti freshly dight  
in fragrant garlands greets the day  
That drives her care away. (114)

Now yawning Love lays down his bow,  
and the flowered arrows idly spill,  
As Surya with his footprints red  
comes striding up the eastern hill;  
And Night sees all her shades disperse  
and all her lesser lights absorb  
One omnisplendent orb. (115)

## A Messenger Poem

ANONYMOUS

Tutu is a prolific genre in Tamil. These are the messenger poems having its roots in the Cankam Akam classics, where the heroine addresses birds, bees, crabs and southwind etc. to spell out her pangs of separation to the hero. This idea was further developed by the poets of Bhakti period like Tiruinana Sambandhar and Nammalvar to reinforce the relation between God and the Soul. In later centuries this technique was fully utilized by the medieval poets to praise God or the hero by sending messengers like swans, peacocks, parrots, clouds, birds, the southern wind, a piece of cloth, tobacco, paddy etc.,

This excerpt is from *Tamil Vitu Tutu* by an anonymous poet, who sends Tamil language as a messenger to receive the grace of Lord Shiva, since the poet firmly believes that Tamil is very competent to beseech grace from the Lord.

*i*

The following are verses 46-60 of this work.

All that see you will unflinchingly say  
 That you may be named the Lord of Letters.  
 But aren't you also the World's Emperor?  
 Holding *Chakkaram*<sup>1</sup> in hand, you may mount  
 A huge *ter*, swim across *Chulikulam*  
 To reach the *Chatukkam* and may be seen  
 Sitting on the sanctified *Chankam* bench.  
 Decked with sweet-smelling *Malaimarrus*,  
 A dazzling army of divisions four,  
 Encircling and greeting with the sound of drums,  
 Hemmed around by the three monarchs mighty.  
 The decades of *Tevaram* in metres diverse  
 By the trinity reputed, each an image  
 Of God's grace, the holy word uttered by  
 The poet of Vatavur, his *Tirukkovaigar*,  
 Recited by him for Aran to write,  
 The blameless mother's *Irattaimanimalai*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Grammars with their verse formulas graceful,  
 The five epics by bards grounded in prosody,

1. Chakkaram, Chulikulam, Chatukkam and Malaimarru and different kinds of picture poems.

2. Karaikkal Ammaiyar.

Mighty tomes and marvellous treats that  
 At length treat attributes eighteen of kings,  
 Cheraman's *Ponvannattantati* that charmed  
*Ampalattan* as he heard it at *Tillai*,  
 The same poet's earlier work *Mummanimalai*,  
 Pattinattar's poetic wreath woven by him  
 To be worn round the neck of Lord Shiva,  
*Mummanikkovai*, the monuments  
*Pattuppattu* and *Ettuttokai* indited  
 By the wisest of the wise; the flawless  
*Patinenkilkanakku*; the exquisite  
*Kalampakam* of the twin poets hailing  
 The hill of gold, the spotless god of *Matai*;  
 The rare *Parani* on the hero who, killing  
 A thousand elephants, conquered *Kalinkam*;  
 The *Ula*<sup>1</sup> which won for *Kuttar* from the king  
 Of *Kutal* a thousand sovereigns for  
 Every verse; the same writer's *Pillaittamil*;  
 Authors of all these and many more works  
 That will never perish serve as your guards.

ii

The following lines are verses 73-95:

Though omniscient, the gods possess three virtues  
 While you, free from blame, are endowed with ten.  
 Not more than five *Vannams*<sup>2</sup> others could create.  
 But a hundred of them you can boast of;  
 For the tongue there are *rasas* six to taste,  
 Nine *rasas* to feed the ear flow from you;  
*Vanappus*<sup>3</sup> are eight for you, one for others,  
*Porulkols*<sup>4</sup> for you are eight, for kings three.  
 You have *aimpa*<sup>5</sup> besides a mighty *muppai*.  
 Where are the rich with the thirty *chirs* you don't?  
 You freed Cheraman from *talais*<sup>6</sup> tying

1. *Iracha Rachan Ula* and *Kulottunkam Pillaittamil* are two of the great works by Ottakkuttar.
2. *Yapparunkalakkarikai* claims that Tamil has a hundred *Vannams*.
3. According to *Tolkappiyam*, there are eight *Vanappus* in Tamil.
4. For kings there are three sources of income. *Nannul* speaks of eight ways of deriving meanings from poems.
5. *Muppai* is *Tirukkural* which speaks of *aram*, *porul* and *inbam*. *Aimpa* refers to the five divisions, *An*, *Penn*, *Palar*, *Onran* and *Palavin Pals*.
6. Cheraman was released from imprisonment by Cholan Chenkanan at the request of the poet Poykaiyar who wrote a poem on the latter.



His legs; can seven *talais* fetter your feet ?  
 When you provide knowledge to poets, my king !  
 Is it right to say you are *Venpa*<sup>1</sup> bare?  
 A matchless song of merit, beauty and rhythm,  
 You have prospered during the three yugas;  
 Is it proper to call you Kalippa ?  
 When you deliver us from the delusion  
 That spreads wide as never-ending darkness,  
 How is it just to name you Marutpa ?  
 A grand poem that with ten graces illumines,  
 Your fate is to be known as *Viruttam*.  
 Will the three flames famed to shed light reach me  
 Like you to dispel my mind's darkness drear ?  
 Isn't it because Chintamani<sup>2</sup> bears your name  
 Generous it has become by nature?  
 or any ornaments made of gold and pearl.  
 Or jewels that adorn necks and shoulders  
 Comparable to your single *Alankaram*<sup>3</sup>  
 As you confer knowledge that forever grows  
 You are *porul*; does gold deserve this title ?  
 Other possessions kings may claim, thieves steal;  
 The one *porul* that stays with us is you.  
 A disciplined life here and a divine life  
 In Heaven are assured to all that attain  
 Glory with your help; those that ignore you  
 Are driven to seek Yama's land in the south.  
 O, charming Tamil ! Of Shiva and you  
 Who helped whom to win everlasting fame ?  
 Were you on the palm of Saraswati,  
 Or was she on the palm-leaf of Tamil ?  
 Was it the god<sup>4</sup> that sleeps on the snake-mat  
 That you followed or out of respect  
 Had he to walk behind you with the rolled mat ?  
 Did Murukan teach you to the eager sage  
 Or did you urge Agastya to learn you ?  
 Is the Lord of Mutturai your *Porul*,  
 Or is it you that he cherished as his ?

*Tamil Vitu Tutu*, 13th century

Tr. by P. Marudanayagam

1. *Venpa*, *Kalippa*, *Murutpa* and *Viruttappa* are names of different types of poems. The poet puns on all the four.
2. *Chivaka Chintamani* is the name of an epic by Tiruttakkatevar.
3. The reference is to *Tantialankaram* which deals with the figures of speech in Tamil.
4. In a legendary account, Tirumal is reported to have followed Tirumalical Alvar as he was desirous of listening to the Tamil poems of the latter.

## Nannul

### PAVANANTI

PAVANANTI (13th century), the author of *Nannul* (Nannūḷ), was a Jain ascetic. He dedicated his work to Chiyakangan, probably a petty chieftain, who lived in Madura country, after the fall of the Pandya kingdom. Chiyakangan requested Pavananti to give the essence of *Tolkappiyam* in brief and simple treatise, incorporating the various changes that had entered into the Tamil language in course of time. Actually the importance of *Nannul* lies in its recognition of the changes that occurred in the language after *Tolkappiyam* and adaptation of the new ideas in language study. Pavananti intended writing on all the five aspects of language, which he enumerates in his introduction, but lived only to complete the first two, orthography and etymology.

#### Explanation of the Figurative Expression—Thread

A literary work is called Nul, signifying thread (but here figuratively used), to denote the labour attending the composition of a work, as compared to the spinning of cotton etc. thus, the words are cotton; the composition is twisted thread; the spinning maid that twists the thread represents the learned author; her hand employed in turning the machine is analogous with the author's mouth; and the spindle by means of the relation of which the thread is twisted represents the author's mind; thus the twisting of thread and the writing of a work are analogous. (24)

#### A Nul Used to Measure Timber

As the crookedness of a piece of timber is made straight by the application of *nul*, a carpenter's line or cord, so the crookedness (ignorance or prejudice) of the mind is removed or made straight by the application of *nul*, a literary work; therefore, the word *nul*, besides signifying thread, is also figuratively used to denote a carpenter's or mason's line or cord. (25)

#### The Qualities of a Teacher

The character and qualifications of a teacher are: 1. He must be of high or good caste; 2. benevolent or affable; 3. a believer and worshipper of God; 4. respectable; 5. having practical knowledge of the different branches of learning; 6. possessing teaching powers; 7. bearing comparison with (a) the earth, (b) a mountain, (c) a balance, and (d) a flower; 8. having a knowledge of the world-(common sense) and 9. of a good disposition. (26)

**How a Teacher Must Resemble the earth, Greatness, Power,  
Patience, Productiveness.**

A teacher is compared to the earth because of 1. the imperceptible magnitude, 2. unflinching firmness, 3. Interminable patience, 4. and multifarious productions of the earth. (27)

**How the Teacher Must Resemble a Mountain in Greatness,  
Resources, Firmness, Reputation, Disinterestedness.**

A teacher is compared to a mountain, because of 1. the unsearchableness or undefinableness of its solid contents; 2. of its immeasurable riches; 3. of its immoveable stability; 4. of its lofty prominence; 5. and because of its naturally affording refreshing streams even in the driest seasons (28)

**How a Teacher Must Resemble a Balance,  
Resolve Doubts With Impartiality.**

A teacher is compared to a balance, because the exact perpendicular position of the index of indicator sets beyond doubt the impartial adjustment of the scales, so a teacher by imparting knowledge, removes doubts and rectifies the mind. (29)

**How a Teacher Must Resemble a Flower, Auspicious,  
Necessary, Honoured but Gentle, Cheerful**

A teacher is compared to a flower, because by its mild beauty and sweet fragrance, it is the emblem of joy, the indispensable requisite of every festivity and adornment. (30)

**Who are Disqualified for the Office of a Teacher**

Persos disqualified to be teachers are: 1. those who are devoid of natural talent for imparting knowledge; 2. who are of a mean disposition; 3. jealous or envious; 4. avaricious; 5. deceitful; 6. intimidating the minds of scholars by magnifying difficulties; and 7. those who on account of their untractableness bear comparison to (a) marbles in a pot, (b) to a rough palymra tree (c) to a cotton holder, and (d) to a crooked cocoanut tree. (31)

**The Immethodical Teacher, a Jar of Marbles, No Settled Plan**

An immethodical teacher is compared to marbles in a pot, because marbles in a pot do not lie in order and regularity, but promiscuously and in confusion. (32)

**The inaccessible teacher, the Tree Whose Fruit  
Cannot Be Obtained Till It Drops of Itself**

An inaccessible teacher is compared to a rough palmyrah tree, on account of the difficulty of having access to its fruit, unless it drops it spontaneously. (33)

**The Half-instructed teacher, the Tinder Box with Small  
Mouth Hard to Put In and Hard to Get Out**

A half-instructed teacher is compared to a cotton-holder, or tinder-box, which receives through its small aperture little by little with great difficulty, and then dispenses little by little with greater difficulty. (34)

**The Teacher Who Neglects His Own Pupils to Attend to  
Others, the Coconut Tree Leans Over and  
Drops its fruit into a stranger's grounds**

A neglectful teacher is compared to a recumbent coconut tree which leans over and drops its fruit into a stranger's ground, and deprives the owner of the fruit. (35)

**The Method of Teaching**

The method or way of teaching: in the first place suitable time and place must be selected; then, the teacher, occupying an elevated seat, must invoke his Deity; having the substance of his lectures thoroughly digested in his mind; and having a knowledge of the capacity of his scholar, he must impart instruction not in a hasty manner, nor in an angry tone, but willingly, cheerfully and ingenuously. (36)

**Who Are to be Taught; Six Classes of Persons**

Persons who are to be taught; a teacher should impart instruction 1. to his own son; 2. to his teacher's son; 3. to the king's son; 4. to him who pays well; 5. to him who is likely to prove useful to himself; and 6. to the talented (promising). (37)

**Good, Middling and Bad Scholars; Eight Comparisons**

There are three classes of scholars or students; the good, the middling and the bad; the good are compared to a swan, or a cow; the middling are compared to the ground, or a parrot; and the bad are compared to a pot full of holes, a goat, a buffalo, or the web of a coconut or palmyra tree. (38)

**Who Must Not be Taught: Fifteen Faults**

Persons who should not be taught; a teacher should not impart instruction to 1. the drunkard; 2. the slothful; 3. the self-opinionated (falsely modest,

supercilious); 4. the lascivious; 5. the thievish; 6. the sickly; 7. the indigent; 8. the surly (sulky); 9. the wrathful; 10. the sleepy; 11. the dull-headed; 12. the despiring; 13. the cruel.; 14. the reprobate; 15. and those addicted to falsehood. (39)

### The Way to Learn

The way to learn, or the duties of a scholar towards his teacher are: 1.early attendance; 2. respectful obedience; 3. conformity with the teacher's disposition; 4. attention to injunctions by word of mouth or sign, to sit, to rise etc. to read, to stop etc; 5. thirsting for knowledge, having a love for learning; 6. in the act of receiving instruction, sitting immovable as a statue, making his ear and mind serve the purposes of mouth and stomach (to take in knowledge); desiring to hear again and again what was once said; 7. and retaining in memory the substance of what was imparted; 8. and then rising to go (home) when ordered to do so: these are the injunctions of the learned. (40)

### Methods of Study

Method of study: 1. strenuous exertions are to be put forth by the scholar in the attainment of both the colloquial and the classical parts of the language; 2. constantly revising and reflecting; 3. and digesting what has been learnt; 4. and in case of forgetfulness, having recourse to his teacher to have all difficulties and doubts fully explained; 5. cultivating the acquaintance of all well-educated persons; 6. proposing questions to them for removing of doubts; and 7. answering their question proposed to him for solution; by the observance of these laws ignorance will vanish. (41)

### Learn a Second Time

He who has studied a work once and has gone over it (carefully) a second time, will overcome difficulties and understand it better. (42)

### Master it by a Third Hearing

If he has revised a work three times, he will master it, having the teacher's instructions indelibly fixed in his mind. (43)

Thus to learn the opinions of others is one fourth part of scholarship

Though he has fully digested all the instructions of a teacher he will only have attained to one fourth part of perfection. (44)

One fourth more is gained by association with  
the learned. The other half by teaching  
what has been learnt.

One fourth more of perfection is obtained by associating with learned  
fellow-students, and the other half by imparting instructions to others in  
private, and by speaking (lecturing in public); this makes the accomplished  
scholar. (45)

*Nannul*, 13th century

Tr. by The Rev. Bower

## Selections

### NATHAKUPTANAR

NATHAKUPTANAR was a Jain poet, who was the author of *Kundalakeshi* (*Kuṇḍalakesī*).  
*Silappatikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Chivakachintamani*, *Valaiyapati* and *Kundalakeshi*  
became known as "Five great kavyas". There is no justification in this kind of  
classification.

No information is available about the author.  
Two excerpts from *Kundalakeshi* are given here;

#### 1

### The Instability of Human Life

Though the breath that is exhaled  
Returns to the body when inhaled,  
Discerning sages deem each such inhalation  
As a gain indeed;  
Do not grieve therefore, disheartened  
For the death of things like the human body  
That are by nature transient.  
They who weep out of love for the body  
Are only troubling their eyes in vain.

(7)

The heartless demons, the venomous adder,  
And even the terrible Leophant,  
On becoming familiar with us, harm us not,  
Forgetting their native cruelty.  
But pitiless Death, ever part of us,  
Inseparable of yore, from ages past,  
Will not relent towards us.

Though ever so submissive  
 And obedient to his dictates;  
 Oh ! who then can claim,  
 That he can survive  
 Escaping Yama's inexorable grasp ? (8)

We do die right from the time  
 Of our gestation as a foetus in the womb.  
 We die in infancy, we die as adolescents;  
 We die in vigorous youth,  
 When we are enamoured of women's company.  
 Thus again and again we keep dying,  
 Waiting for the inevitable advent  
 Of old age yet to come !  
 When at last we truly die;  
 Daily dying thus, why then  
 Do we not weep for ourselves  
 When we so readily weep for others' deaths ? (9)

We may even come across men captured  
 By their foes and condemned to die,  
 Being led to the place of execution,  
 But by a last minute reprieve  
 Returning to life escaping death;  
 But alas ! there is no escaping by any means  
 from the fell sergeant Death.  
 Who is preparing everyday to suck our life;  
 Each day of our life is like a sword  
 Which is held against our neck to sever our head.  
 We go daily towards our execution;  
 Can we say truly that we live each day? (10)

## 2

## The Baseness of the Human Body

How can we be in love with this body,  
 Saying it is sweet-smelling and fragrant,  
 When the truth is otherwise ?  
 From its nine orifices, the impurities  
 Excreted from within, stinking ooze out;  
 The dogs desirous of eating the flesh,

Seize and drag us this way and that,  
When foul pus streams out of the skin;  
How can we expect from this body,  
Fragrant smells pleasing to the mind?  
Oh ! say truly !

(11)

\*

Women enamoured of men's rotund arms,  
Hailing them as the very "Mantara Mountain"  
To the left and the right;  
Or as massive rising pillars of emerald gems !  
Whereas carrion kites and dogs fight over them,  
To eat the flesh and seize upon them,  
Plucking and pulling at them again and again;  
While so, how can then women  
Take pleasure in these stout, strong arms,  
Ultimately food only for beasts of prey,  
Oh ! say truly !

(12)

All the limbs arranged in order  
In this big bag of flesh and bones,  
And put together as a body;  
Bewitch and titillate us  
Only because they are encased,  
In a beautiful covering of skin,  
Without which it will only repel us.  
While so, when life leaves the body,  
The limbs drop off, become rotten and waste away,  
Scorned by all who see this revolting sight;  
At such a time, who will find,  
Any attraction in such a body?  
Oh ! say truly !

(13)

O you, wicked one !  
If you think of this body of yours  
Only as a vessel for pleasure,  
Belonging to you only, you are mistaken;  
How is it yours when hordes of worms  
Small and big in size like cooked millet rice,  
Have taken residence in your body,  
Which is their food, as well as their dwelling?  
Can you then call this



Despicable body, so rotten and base,  
Yours alone ?

(14)

From *Kundalakeshi*, 13th-14th century

Tr. by K. G. Seshadri

## Poems

### PATTINATTAR II

PATTINATTAR II (Paṭṭiṇattār, 14th century) was a popular saint-poet who lived in Kaveripumpattinam. His namesake Pattinattar I belonged to an earlier period. He was a wealthy merchant. When he was at the height of worldly joy and pride, his son surprisingly disappeared, sending his father, a palm leaf scroll with an eyeless needle; On the scroll was written "even the eyeless needle will not go with you on your last journey. After reading this, Pattinattar had a sudden change. It was really a turning point in his life. He realized the transient nature of the world, gave up everything and became an ascetic. Wearing only a loin cloth he was wandering through the length and breadth of Tamil country. In his last days he reached Tiruottriyur near Madras and attained Samadhi.

His work *Pattinattar Pataltirattu* (Paṭṭiṇattār Pataltirattu) is a collection of poems known for their philosophical content. *Kachchitiru Akaval*, *Egamba Malai* etc. are some of his other works. His *Poduppatal* is a collection of 105 songs.

Our home is Tiruvaalangkaadu; we have with us  
A begging bowl, God-given and never empty;  
To supply us whatever we need, there is the rich land;  
O goodly heart, there is none here our equal.

(2)

\*

The hand does something; the eyes seek some other thing;  
The mind is after another thing; the tongue speaks  
About yet another things ; the fleshy body does  
Something else; the ears hear something different.  
It is thus, even thus, I do my *puja*.  
How will you, queller of Karma, approve this ?

(4)

\*

For ever hail the flower-feet of the strong-armed Lord  
Of Annamalai, O my heart !  
In this world, of what avail the wealth  
Tinct with evil and the buried riches ?  
Even an eyeless needle accompanies you not  
After you decease.

(10)



Wife, children, happiness of domestic life  
 Stop at the doors; the kinsfolk, at the crematory;  
 What may the help be on your way ?  
 Should your *tapas* in the past, though it be  
 The size of a mere millet or sesame, possess you,  
 You will gain the celestial world;  
 I affirm that this is the truth. (12)



Wealth and life halt at home; wives  
 And daughters whose eyes rain tears, at the street;  
 Sons who press their heads with their hands  
 Sobbing and wailing, stop at the crematory;  
 It is your virtue and sin that follow you. (13)



We have heard that ruin visits the joy  
 Of possessions like neat-cattle, calves and children;  
 Now listen to me, O mind !  
 For us there are a begging-bowl, some rags,  
 The mystic pentad of letters for chanting  
 And the support of the servitors of the Lord  
 Who wears a *rodu*<sup>1</sup> and whose throat is blue. (18)



No deed is done by me; O God, I am blessed  
 To realize that You are the doer; in this birth  
 To have not (consciously) done any evil deed;  
 Is it the result of the evil that I did  
 Before my present birth that has now manifested ? (22)



Fire claims it as its; so too the worm;  
 The earth, the vulture, the jackal and the base cur  
 Similarly claim it. Lo ! I lovingly fostered  
 This stinking body. What is it that I gain by it ? (26)



My mother, the one that bore me, called me a corpse  
 And forsook me; my wives around whose necks  
 I have strung that golden wedding lockets lamented and said:  
 "Let it go away". My sons, who received all from me,  
 Made circumambulations at the crematory  
 And broke the ritual pot.  
 Aid there is none save Yours, O Lord ! (28)

\*

The mouth stinks, the snarled-up hair smells;  
 The rheum of the eyes tinct with collyrium stinks;  
 The body reeks like cadaver; the big hole  
 Of anus stinks; the vagina smells putrid like pus;  
 Flowing semen smells foul;  
 Why is my mind after women who are such stuff ? (31)

\*

There is the grace-abounding mystic pentad  
 Of letters for chanting; there is the holy ash too  
 For proud adornment as ordained;  
 There is the sooty rag for wearing  
 In the refuse-dump of the street; I am emboldened  
 To beg of any one irrespective of caste  
 I suffer not from any want. (32)

\*

What did you gain by your adornment of the holy ash  
 Or your bath in the holy rivers ? You know not  
 The way to get born into a new and transformed life;  
 Though you chant, what do you know  
 Of the seven crore mantras treasured up in the Vedas ?  
 Though in the river, yet are you unaware of the ford,  
 And only get tossed about, O you, mind, (40)

\*

With the axe of the mystic pentad of letters,  
 I cut to the roots the wood of the five deceptive senses,  
 Reclaimed the land, sowed the seed  
 Of "Sada-Shiva", removing the weed;  
 Thus have I cultivated the bliss of Shiva. (46)

\*

The day you stand humbled by chill penury,  
 Your mother, kin and women, will forsake you  
 And say; "Who are you ? What have I to do with you ?"  
 At that hour, malady will inhabit you;  
 Save that illness and the mat you lie on, who else  
 Are your kind then, o you, a mere body ? (47)

\*

She whose eyes are touched with collyrium,  
 Sons and domestic life, O Lord of ruddy fire,  
 Are of Your magic phantoms; in this world  
 They appeared to be true; as days rolled on  
 They gradually faded away,  
 Like a fabrication, an old tale and a dream. (52)

\*

Kinship of servitors, devotion for Shiva-pooja,  
 Reverence for life; Only these constitute  
 The fruit of embodiment in this world.  
 The race of kin, wife and living ordained  
 By Brahma are like unto clay pots  
 Smashed by a club; knowing this  
 The hermits keep themselves away from this tribe. (54)

From *Patalirattu*, 14th century

Tr. by T. N. Ramachandran

## Selections

### UMAPATI SHIVACHARIAR

UMAPATI SHIVACHARIAR (Umāpati Sīvācāriār, 14th century) hailed from the "Three thousand Brahmin priests of Tillai" who were privileged to officiate in the worship of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. He was a scholar both in Sanskrit Veda Agamas and Tamil Bhakti literature. He was initiated by Maraijnanasambandhar. Umapati was condemned for his unconventionalism by the generality of the Dikshitaras, who ostracized him from the sacred precincts of Chidambaram. He took shelter in a mutt in Korravankudi.

Of the 14 Siddhanta Shastras, Umapati contributed 8. *Potrippahrodai* and *Nencuvitu-tutu* explain the philosophy of Shaiva Siddhanta in a lucid manner. Both the works refer to Maraijnanasambandhar, his spiritual guru. The latter is a poetic message sent by Umapati to his revered preceptor.

*I*

## A Panegyric

*i*

## The Dance Divine

The Four-Faced Cone on the flower enscons'd,  
 The Devas and their King, He whose bosom  
 Lustrous, displays His consort and the Gem,  
 Chanted Veda, Nada and Nadanta  
 These as much as they could, with their own light  
 Sought after; still th' saving light infinite  
 Glows as the immeasurable Beyond;  
 Yet is it redemptive for all, filling  
 The forum bright with great gems, pois'd for Dance  
 To quell the cycle of transmigration;  
 May th' blissful Posture of Dance, us protect

*ii*

## The Way

Evolving, preserving and granting rest  
 After dissolution—severally  
 And differently — the great way boundless  
 Without beginning or middle or end  
 Doth act eternal; may That us protect.

*iii*

## The Redemptive Knowledge

Like husk and bran to paddy, verdigris  
 To copper which beginningless exist,  
 And like the pervasion of saltiness  
 In the waters of ocean-stream ancient,  
 Anava Mala exists eternal—  
 Many several things only partially  
 Resembling — formlessly inhabits  
 All souls; like a mighty serpent that holds  
 The great shapely gem in its fanged mouth.  
 Like the wood that conceals the fire within,  
 Anava Mala of cruel deeds wild  
 Doth veil the eyes of our soul's wisdom whereby

All poor souls become dead to thoughtful deeds;  
 (Yet) the Lord commingling with souls grants them  
 The help of Maya and its evolutes—  
 The Body, th' Inner Organs, and the World  
 Phenomenal —; tho' thus endow'd, as Mind  
 And its allies bewilderment beget,  
 Unto the souls are righteousness, and sin  
 Reveal'd; by them is caused embodied life,  
 Which endured, at the right time is granted  
 The knowledge redemptive by the Great Deed;  
 may That us protect.

*iv*

### The Power Never-false

Pre-determining

Each birth conforming to two-fold deeds wrought,  
 In the congress of the gracious parents  
 When the male essence falls into th' uterus  
 Like a tiny dew-drop on a blade o' grass,  
 Saving it from the heat of maw's furnace,  
 The devouring of esurient worms  
 Which teem there, and the heat of Inferno  
 Uterine; commensurate with th' effect  
 Of deeds perform'd, affording all the limbs  
 Like bands and feet, shaping them sans blemish  
 And then fixing it in Yoga serene,  
 Draws it back thro' the self-same narrow path  
 And doth dwell with it in union when born,  
 Th' Power Never-False ! May That us protect.

*v*

### The Path of Kindliness

No sooner born than envelop'd by th' wind  
 Of Maya, th' soul its knowledge pre-natal  
 Doth forfeit, and of ratiocination  
 Becomes void; then th' new-born is made to feel  
 Hunger and is caus'd to cry, hearing which  
 Th' Mother feels pangs as of death, and trembling  
 With melted mind suckles it with the milk  
 Of kindness breast-born; ever thus with rope

Of love are all lives knit and with kindness  
 Are all new-made mothers filled by the Way;  
 May that Path of Kindliness, us protect.

*vi*

### The Help

In delicate infancy innocent,  
 In boyhood, in days of growth subsequent,  
 Affording knowledge befitting the age  
 and endowing gradually  
 of tattwas, the One of unending wealth  
 Stands forth to help; may That One, us protect !

*vii*

### The Righteousness

In the mansion wrought of foul-stinking flesh,  
 Skin-drap'd—a house of worms—, from love benign  
 Are formed apartments five; by hoary bond  
 Of ever-present Anava-mala  
 Is the "life" full firm incarcerated;  
 And in the abode of Mooladhara  
 When life sans brain wallowing languisheth  
 Affording it Kala and Niyati  
 And then lifting it up to the abode  
 Navel of Turiya providing there  
 The Air vital, together with Kala  
 Vidhya and Aranga, by th' help of which  
 Are dimly illumined Deed and Knowledge  
 And Desire; and then causing it to be  
 Sous'd in Gunas three from Mau arising,  
 And raising it with endowed Chitta  
 To the Suzhuti abode of Bosom  
 Where it doth remain perplex'd, unable  
 To discern and distinguish things perceiv'd  
 With the help of Chitta, where lifting it  
 To the Swapna abode of Throat and there  
 Granting all organs save th' Five of Knowledge  
 And the Five of Action; thus causing it

In that state of Dream to eat of th' results  
 Of two-fold deeds in order due; and then  
 In the court of Jagra th' Temple, when life  
 With all organs equipp'd rules; like bright'ning  
 A house with lighted lamp, granting the four  
 Subtle types of Speech unto it to save  
 In sooth 'life', from the murk of Anava  
 The Righteous One doth cause it to function;  
 May That Righteousness, us protect !

*viii*

The Accomptant

The "life"

Unaware of th' eternal help of God  
 For ev' r seeking to quench th' fire of hunger  
 Nev' r fully quenchable hankers after food;  
 Verily are the lives goaded to function  
 In ways manifold their talents befitting  
 Duly are their deeds past, present and future  
 Recorded by the Accomptant, that th' souls  
 May never their consequences escape;  
 May that Great Moving Finger us, protect !

*ix*

The Witness

The eating of th' results of two-fold deeds  
 Is th' rule not merely for mankind but is  
 Common unto all the embodied lives;  
 When time comes for lives to quit their bodies  
 Lives therefrom are separated; to lives  
 That have done deeds righteous, befitting them,  
 Are offer'd Heavenly bodies with which  
 As Mal, Ayan, Lord of Indra-Loks  
 And Devas, they dwell in their ordain'd worlds  
 And long revel in delights manifold  
 For fix'd periods duly appointed;  
 Sin-ridden lives which needs must undergo



The results thereof, are brought by servants  
 Of Yama before their king who eyes them  
 And questions them thus; "O Sinner! Weren't ye  
 Till this day mindful of birthlessness?"  
 Then tho' in ire, he kindly offers 'em  
 Goodly counsel and to his servants, them  
 Handeth ov'r commanding them to cause th' lives  
 Eat of the consequences of their sins;  
 Taking leave of their king, they clothe the lives  
 With Yathana, sarira and cause them  
 To be pounded in oil-press or in flame  
 Thrown; or make them embrace pillars of fire,  
 Or suffer 'em to be pierc'd in their ears  
 By rods of flaming iron or have their own flesh  
 Scissor'd off from their bodies or plunge them  
 Deep in the horrors of Hell and further  
 With resentment great, engulf 'em for days  
 Many many, in cruel Inferno  
 Causing them thus to work out the doings  
 Of their deeds and thus become reformed.  
 Ev'n as the parents and the kinnery  
 Of ailing children suffer their ailments  
 To be diagnos'd with care by doctors  
 And submit them to painful treatment harsh  
 Of cauterization or surgery  
 With heated instruments, or the peeling  
 Of the film that veils the orbs of their eyes  
 And on recovery feel full delighted  
 And reward them that caused pain and anguish  
 To their children and even as th' Monarch  
 Who ran his car ov'r his son to purge him  
 Of his killing a calf caught in his car  
 The Lord witnesseth the Hellish tortures  
 Thrust on lives by Yama's servants angry;  
 May that Cruel Kindliness, us protect !

X

### The Dispenser of Grace

Thus does the peerless First one that whom there is  
 None greater, cause the lives to eat of th' fruit  
 Of two-fold deeds and cause them to be born

Times without number and the lives grow sick  
 Of the cycle of birth and death; and when  
 Time propitious that leads lives far away  
 From Hell comes to them, showing unto them  
 Th' primrose path of th' worship of devotees  
 He grants to them a birth fit for tapas  
 Which is like unto a bud which will spill  
 Honey at the hour of efflorescence;  
 When lives attain to that detached state  
 Realizing well the sourness of two-fold deeds  
 And are deedless pois'd like th' scales' pin central,  
 The Lord of their ripeness takes note and to end  
 Their transmigration pours down His Power  
 Of Grace into them in fitting measure  
 May That Dispenser of Grace, us protect !

*xi*

### The Humaneness Divine

The only *mala* of Vijnanakala—  
 Righteous and Mutthi bound—, He will by His  
 Inly illumination in them snap;  
 Unto pralayakala who in love  
 Abounding flourish, He as the Lord, doth  
 Manifest and cures them of their Anava  
 And Karma Mala; and to th' Sakala  
 Earthy, He appears in a form that does  
 Theirs resemble to rid them of their mala  
 Three-fold; thus them He claims; eternal are  
 These His qualities; therefore doth He hold  
 On to His Dance Divine; concealing well  
 His jasper-hu'd Consort who shares His frame  
 Th' river bound in His hallowed matted locks.  
 The crescent, the hooded serpent fearsome,  
 The eye of upward glowing flame in the midst  
 Of His Beauteous forehead, th' drum that doth  
 Sound concord, the flame of light wielded  
 By His left hand, the cincture of serpent,  
 The spotted vestment bright of tiger-skin  
 Around the hip, the luminous anklet  
 Which is inseparable from His Feet  
 That plunge mellow'd souls in the blissful flood  
 Of mutthi, end the hearts o' devotees true;  
 And the Kazhal yclept Kantamani

Triumphal, — deck'd to quell furtive Karma,  
 And thus snap the cycle of birth and death.  
 To grant endless bliss of release to men  
 Like even unto us, as tho' the nev'r-born  
 Is now born, He sans name manifests Himself  
 Bearing the nomen Sambhanda Nathan  
 Deck'd with the garland of honied flowers  
 And doth live happily like the earth-born  
 Eating, slumb' ring, fearing and enjoying !  
 May That Humaneness Divine, us protect !

*xii*

Upholder of Justice

Unto us he did inculcate the six  
 Religions eternal and made us all  
 Clear perceive the impossibility  
 Of attainment of blest mutthi thro' them;  
 And lo, this knowledge is indeed our boon !  
 Our befuddled chitta He clarified  
 By his divine presence, but not content  
 With this, He did initiate us in th' path  
 Supreme of Salva wisdom infinite  
 Beginning with Samaya and ending  
 In Abhisheka; by his divine look  
 He cause'd the wound of cruel birth, and deeds  
 Two-fold, vanish; on our head He did place  
 His beauteous hand flowery and did melt  
 Our stony heart and did elucidate  
 Unto us Truth's nature; like recession  
 Of murk from sky into space at th' advent  
 Of ruddy sun, He the just one did cause  
 Anava Mala, tho' it be deathless  
 To cease its ceaseless hold on me henceforth  
 May That Holder of justice, us protect !

*xiii*

The Thievery

Unto those that practise Charya and Kriya  
 And Yoga He grants the patha-mutthis;  
 Desiring to grant me—the most unfit one—

The great boon of Jnanam thro' which He is  
 Perceiv'd, which when obtain'd by devotion  
 True, causeth its possessor to feel truly  
 Asham'd of his former self-learnt knowledge,  
 The sacred beauteous feet that ev' r lie  
 Far far away from all beings— Mal, Ayan  
 And Devas — but always nigh unto th' true,  
 The Merciful One gave me fittingly  
 To wear on my crown and shall I speak of  
 The gift I receiv'd from Him ? 'Tis that of  
 Non — difference; no longer's He from me  
 Different; tho' sans beginning He is  
 Present in me and knows it to be so  
 I have not known of it; this thievery is  
 This day made known to me by His Feet;  
 May Those us protect !

*xiv*

The Great Revelation

With abundant affection surcharged  
 Declar'd Himself to me and when myself  
 Reveal'd He to me, who lay bound to th' grace  
 Of His feet, I began to realize,  
 My form was ephemeral as lightning  
 Bright; the 'wilderment by the Gunas caus'd,  
 Vivifying Kala, Kala, and tattwas  
 Never did belong to my Kevala self;  
 These were for the Sakala state only;  
 He did eke reveal to me the pure state  
 When, for good, will I be of these full free;  
 May That Revelation great us protect !

*xv*

How to Hymn Him ?

"Finding all tattwas to be false we have  
 Forsak'n them all; so we stand clarified  
 Other than one's own self there is nothing,"  
 Thus thinking they back-bite us, Siddhantins"  
 Merrily; not leading us to th' darkness  
 In which are plung'd th' "Aham Brahm" theorists

Who dare equate themselves with the Changeless Brahm,  
 Thou taughtest me Thy state to be pure light  
 Of wisdom and th' absolute dependence  
 Of lives on Thee; again thou ledst me not  
 To th' base group of Shiva-Samavadhins  
 Who place themselves on a par with Shiva  
 Not partaking of the bliss of Shiva  
 Totally differing from their own joy;  
 Preventing my mingling with them, thou didst  
 Grant me the sight of Thy presence  
 In all things every-where and hadst myself  
 Merg'd within the bliss of Thy golden feet  
 And thus demonstrating union with Thee;  
 Envelop'd my knowledge with Thine wisdom  
 Infinite and all-embracing; As thou  
 Sought me and freely gave me the nectar  
 Of the supreme sea of eternal bliss  
 I flourish by Thy mercy protected—  
 Even in this state of human bondage  
 In which flesh and life appear to be true;  
 In my fettered plight too, art thou not  
 O Ancient one, living linked with me?  
 Can ev' r my hymn, o' praise thy glory measure !

\*

Hail sacred Tillai; hail Shiva Bhoga,  
 Hail Sambhanda's holy works o' wisdom true,  
 Hail th' golden feet of our Saint Sambhanda  
 Which dwelling in us quell our life's shackle.

*Potrippahrotai*, 14th century

Tr. by T. N. Ramachandran

## II

### The Message Sent by the Heart

#### *i*

#### The Nature of God

The nimbus-hued Meal of flowery navel  
 The Four-faced decked with lotus chaplet golden

As boar and swan, burrowed the earth and winged the sky  
 But could not of His Nature know; again,  
 Neither Indra, nor dwellers ethereal  
 Nor others of all the different worlds,  
 Nor habitants of Mantra-mountain great,  
 And billowy seas, nor Mantras, Vedas,  
 Nor Nada and Vintu-the crown and flower  
 Of Vedas, His Nature can comprehend.  
 He who is for ever easy of access  
 (To the godly) is past both speech and logic;  
 He is small as He is the subtlest;  
 His Frame His Consort shares; invisible  
 He is formless who hath a form as well  
 And a formless-form too and none of these;  
 He is the deathless one who is the Life  
 Of mortals' life, He in sooth is the true one  
 To the devoutly true; He indeed is the Deed  
 Behind the deed; unto the false He is  
 The false one fictitious; He is the Father—  
 The Lord-God, the dweller in His Flock

*ii*

The Nature of Soul

Though I be eternal as the Bright one  
 I abided not in the abiding state true.  
 But fared forth for ever in transmigration  
 Of all kinds of birth that are engendered  
 In ovum, or sweet, or seed, or matrix  
 And suffered deaths innumerable times;  
 Even then, the more fool that I really am  
 For ever bound to eat of the two-fold deed !  
 Unschooled, with low knowledge condemned was I  
 To join the-Lokayaths; then an arrow  
 Faster I sped forth and did evil deeds  
 That my family to shame did expose;  
 Heinous murder, larceny, lechery,  
 I sought after and in them all wallowed;  
 I'd not seek to know what ought to be known;  
 Unto the mind forlorn and buddhi errant,  
 And to arrogance by buddhi begot.

I slaved, grew weary as body wearied.  
 And did waste as my body wasted, sure;  
 I know not of my life's sorrows to relate.

*iii*

The Nature of Bond

To flint-hearted Lust, Wrath, Passion, Pride, Envy  
 And to the faculties ten and *matras* ten,  
 To the five elements illimitable,  
 To brain-pervading felony three-fold,  
 Gunas three-fold, malas three-fold and states  
 Three-fold and to deeds two-fold which all things  
 Embrace, to the invisible airs ten.  
 To relations, the very form of deeds two-fold  
 And to wealth rare, I slaved and hard did work  
 Deep immersed in boundless fear and cruelty  
 Ignoring the pursuit of the path great  
 That leads to the great God, Serpent-cinctured  
 But stood plunged, all bewildered in billows  
 Of buffeting sea of deed-breeding tools;  
 Dawning wisdom imparts the saving truth  
 That Truer Kinsman than Thou, there is none.  
 They that really realize this truth, the knowledge  
 Of Life, and the Great Being that truly is  
 The knowledge behind the knowledge of Life  
 Are the absolutely liberated;  
 Others in the net of bewilderment  
 Are entangled sure; thus did speak the poet  
 Of divine afflatus, Valluvar great.  
 His words of truth I ignored and did toil  
 To propitiate full the senses five,  
 And in this did persist relentlessly  
 Only to sink deep in the sea of sin;  
 Caught was I by the net of damozels' eyes  
 Where I learnt the fine art of lechery;  
 Little knowing the true state I blabbered  
 Full many a word of cruel import.  
 For ever in the cycle of birth and death  
 I involved my self; Behold, O my Heart  
 The decadent plight of my piteous life !  
 Now hearken with care to what I relate.

*iv*

### The State of God

He is the One enthroned on the Silver Mount;  
 His smile of frown did to cinders reduce,  
 The forts of those that respected Him not,  
 He is the bright Light superne that issues  
 From the summation of Vedas boundless,  
 He is the Alpha, the Immaculate,  
 The One to whom blemish is alien,  
 He's known only by the knowledge of theqse  
 That possess enlightened knowledge divine;  
 In their bosoms he enters to abide  
 He is the One of Space righteous that sustains  
 The inner space of Space, He is the Light  
 That lights the light of the Grace begotten;  
 He is the Gracious One, the Giver of grace  
 To Grace; immeasurable He doth stand  
 Pervading all; He's already with them  
 That think of Him; He is not to be known  
 By mere knowledge; He is the fadeless one  
 Of effulgence, the blooming brilliance  
 All-pervasive; the flame immutable  
 On earth; the blemishless One invisible  
 Save to the inner eye; the One immanent  
 And transcendent too; of the ineffable  
 God's glory, I . . . fetter'd of deeds two-fold  
 Will relate to you, as in my power  
 It lies; now I bid thee listen with care.

*v*

### The Ten Insignia

*1*

#### The Mountain

He is beyond the touch of *pasam* manifold  
 And His is the Mountain of Love and Grace.



## 2

## The River

From the Mountain of Righteousness supreme  
 Down descends His River, winding its course  
 To the delight of earthly lives, destroys  
 Doubt, theft, fear, lust, murder, wrath and effects  
 Of all the deeds; runs with bosom-thrilling  
 Sound of "Oum" through Vedas and Agamas  
 Grace-abounding; dashes forth uprooting  
 The thicket of triple mala and passes  
 Beyond the shore of scriptures and instruction  
 To quell experience empirical;  
 Removes the five-fold passion and desire  
 Yclept the long-renowned body, mouth, eyes  
 Nose and ear; wipes out full the weakening  
 Speech, feet, hands, and organs excretory  
 And genitals; gushes torrentially  
 To pull down the irremovable bondage  
 Forest-like; and rolls on everywhere to dash  
 To pieces, by its grace, the mind, buddhi  
 Ahamkar and chitta ever distracting;  
 On it flows washing three gunas away;  
 The confounding of senses ceases as it  
 Courses with thrill supreme through the human frame  
 To sever the lust bred by damozels  
 Whose bosoms boast of sandal paste fragrant  
 And to fill the fields of passionlessness;  
 Forth it proceeds to purify the abodes  
 Of Sun, Moon, and Agni and in justness  
 Is firm attached to the bases six and spreads  
 In the realm beyond the ten curs mighty  
 And higher Soars beyond the elements five  
 To transcend Ayan, Ara, Mahesha  
 And Sada-Shiva and all the tatwas too  
 Of Nada and Vintu and the fathomless  
 Zero which it doth subdue and again  
 Passes beyond the land of knowledge great,  
 Absorbent of all the innumerables.  
 (Thus) it grants to Souls clarified and from  
 Doubts freed. Its Own Knowledge which is Moksha.  
 And dwells in all flesh inseparable. . . .  
 And as its own entering their very lives  
 Like the coursing beyond the five bodily states

Towards the great sempiternal haven  
Of ever-lasting effulgence great doth run  
His River of Bliss Stream, Grace-abounding.  
Perpetual coolth, from deception free.

3

The Country

Comprehension and practice of Sruti  
And agamas lead to perennial bliss  
Which is His Country inaccessible.

4

The Town

His Town is the dwelling of such souls which  
Learning by mastery of arts, eight times eight,  
Have cut asunder the source of all desires;  
Placid remains their Chinta in Silence  
Unique of Shiva-Gnanam soused for ever.

5

The Garland

A flood of tears bred by love cascade from  
The eyes of devotees; their Chinta  
Is serene, of confounding doubts well-cleared  
Theirs is realization; constantly thrilled  
Their bodily hairs stand ever erect;  
Of falsehood they will have none; their hearts true  
Atremble melt with love unbounded for Him;  
The great Grace that draws these hearts is His Garland.

6

The Horse

His is the Horse which abides recondite  
In the thought of those thinkers who reside

Beyond the dark realm of space, universe,  
Mountains, seas, underworlds—all seven-fold,  
Transcending the five organs, the elements  
Life and feeling; they are knowledge, and are  
All things as well as the reverse thereof.

## 7

## The Elephant

Penetrating beyond the nether worlds  
By rare words pictured, it is the support  
Of seven-fold-middle and upper-worlds;  
Is ineffable and effable and is of  
The form, life and soul of Vedas and six  
Angas; it quells the vast cruel sorrowing  
*Pasam* and smites the sea of birth to turn  
Dustily dry; again it doth fiercely scorch  
Doubt-breeding lust, anger, miserliness,  
*Moham* and *madam* and extirpates action  
Which causes the cycle of birth and death;  
It does away with the false theories  
Of all the vociferous religions;  
Utterly extirpates fear and murder;  
It speeds dripping ichor of grace divine  
Into the grove of tattwas and feeds on bliss  
Of honey with delight; the Vedas four  
It doth wear as its two pairs of bright tusks;  
It is the Tusker of Divine Gnosis.

## 8

## The Banner

His Banner non-pareil wafteth beyond  
The religions six and clears the world  
Of its burthensome misery immense.

## 9

## The Drum

Quelling the rebellious flesh they do  
Worship the First one in their enthroned hearts;

They are oned with Him are immune from  
Births future; by yogic process they stay  
The straying airs in their bodies; the wind  
Ethereal too they detain and cause the glow  
Of flame ever uniform and achieve bliss  
Of the sound of their lives is wrought His Drum.

10

— The Fiat

In all the worlds created and sustained by  
Ayan and Mal, beyond them and everywhere,  
In the upper worlds and in the city  
Of grace unperceivable, reigns His Fiat.

11

God's Greatness

He is of boundless knowledge; yet He is  
Not to be seen by mere knowledge; He rules  
Over the realm of all arts and knowledge  
By sense utterly incomprehensible,  
A subtle Trickster is He who fills the worlds  
And all the cardinal points with His light;  
He's the One beginningless and endless;  
He stands as the root of all, the seed as well;  
He is that which germinates from the seed;  
He is the body and the *tannmatras*,  
The elements and the pure space of Zero,  
The void and the things beyond the mere void.

12

Gnana Acharya

Unto me the senseless one He granted  
Heaven, my fall into the cruel wave-tossed  
Sea of birth averting; He is my Lord !  
The Saint great Sambandhan ! His blessed feet  
Worshipped by all, he planted on my poor crown;  
My King is He; the Rider of the Bull;

He's the meaning of the words of the wise;  
 The First One beyond compare; self-effulgent;  
 He needeth no happiness from without  
 In the hallowed form mighty of Guru  
 Sans guna or mark he stood, the great Lord!  
 He did snap the bondage, the cause of birth;  
 He abides in tillai where dwells the learned,  
 To mere intellect inaccessible.

## 13

## The Abolition of Mala

He the Lord ethereal came in procession;  
 I adored Him, seeing others Him adore;  
 He threw his eyes on me; in that instant  
 Abolished was the bunch of my mala  
 Five-fold, and He transformed my very thought  
 Uprooting the tattwas — six and ninety,  
 Hard to narrate; to me my inner spa  
 Of honied ambrosia, he did reveal  
 And demonstrate that the sacred ashes white,  
 The form of Shiva's devotee and worship  
 Of Shiva alone to be true; "Riches  
 And life domestic are false", he declared;  
 He did inculcate the inner content  
 Of the Pentad of Syllables sacred  
 And how to chant and count and meditate  
 On it; He taught me to look within too  
 Fearless, and trim the inner taper aflame  
 And merge with the inly light of that lamp  
 Bright with boundless effulgence beautiful;  
 This abides the Lord like honey in bloom;  
 He is to be contemplated even so;  
 He showed me His light wrought of grace sans form  
 And in place sans guna or mark  
 Bade me rest; my life and all He did  
 Unto Himself draw and with me did mate  
 In a flooding grace in intoxication;  
 He made me forget my thievery and did  
 Transform my knowledge into wisdom true;  
 He made me lose my I-ness and My-ness;

My cycle of birth and death he snapped;  
 He is past speech; He's inaccessible  
 To any, howsoever great he be; He is  
 Of divine attributes eight-fold; He is  
 The Wielder great of the letter matchless.  
 He is the Songster great and Dancer grand;  
 He abides in Koodal with a vast court endowed;  
 He is not to be seen by the frivolous,  
 The unfriendly and the flippant; He is  
 The sight of the seer; from Him the Panar  
 A gift of seat wrought of wood did receive;  
 More incarnadine than russet sun-set  
 Is He who is beyond Maa's prehension;  
 All things He fills with His Omnipresence;  
 By His grace He snapt the cycle of birth  
 And death, ever revolving like the fan,  
 Simoon, beetle and rotating wheel of fire.  
 He is the falsity of the ralse ones  
 He is the embosomed truth of them who know;  
 His hand doth wield the axe; O my Bosom !  
 Harken attentively now to the course  
 Of thy journey to Father's abode.

14

The Goal

With each dawning day, himself he perfumes  
 Gormandises, wears vestment velveteen  
 And longs to be soused in the merry sea  
 Of sexy chits of flower-decked locks  
 And maintains that this life Epicurean  
 Is indeed mukti; other joys aren't mukti.  
 Like a devil of darkness he doth lie;  
 Beware him, the Lokayath; go not near him;  
 Go not near them who not having seen the Lord  
 But only themselves, give out; "I am Brahm";  
 Be not trapped by the doctrine Buddhistic  
 Which says; "It is no slanghter to eat the slanghtered  
 The only deity is sure frighter-usness,  
 And right conduct is nothing but patience."  
 With contentment false, their bodies hairs pluck

And discard shamelessly their accoutrement;  
 They maintain that mukti is controlling  
 The senses five; go not near these deceptive Jains.  
 Believe not as true, the words of the Brahmins.  
 Who chant hoary Vedas of goodly words  
 Composed, but know not their import or use.  
 Shun the base who in their hearts do contemn,  
 God-given ashes and God's own Temple;  
 Befriend not fools who have little regard  
 For the true form of tapas, worship, grace,  
 And knowledge true; shut thine eyes on them all  
 Who adore dying gods and hate Shiva.

## 15

## The Message

His eyes cast looks of grace on us and thus  
 Ruled us; He is the great saint Sambandhan;  
 He is the Beyond that lives beyond the End;  
 Hie unto His Court, before him prostrate.  
 Adoringly hail Him high and wish Him  
 Victory eternal and praise Him thus;  
 "You once did peel the skin of the warring mammoth !  
 Will those who eyed Thee in thy procession  
 Be stung by the arrows of Manmathan?  
 Will they think on wealth fleeting and flee Thee  
 To wallow in Hell cruel ? Or will they  
 Be trapped by religions vociferous ?  
 Will they stand confounded many a time ?  
 Will they be witched by the dames whose bright teeth  
 The pearl do excel and be thus fuddled  
 By lewd desire for union with them ?  
 Will they both day and night take notes of what  
 The stars twenty-seven and planets nine  
 Foretell ? O great One whose Eye to cinders  
 Did Manmathan reduce! Setting her mind  
 On the sea of bliss, the damsel hath clean  
 Forgotton her own self; You must rid her  
 Of her sorrows." Say thus and beg of Him

Grant her His roseate feet of louts;  
 So praying, beseech Him adoringly  
 Again and again; from Him His chaplet  
 Of cassia get; extol Him and of Him take  
 Leave to come back and live with me for ever.

•

To rid the deeds begotten by damsels  
 Whose eyes deceptive pierce like arrows.  
 O my Bosom ! fare forth to fetch the garland  
 Or the great Saint Sambandhan who averted  
 My fall into painful transmigration  
 And come back filled with memoried bliss.

*Nenchu Vitu Tutu*, 14th century

*Tr.* by T. N. Ramachandran

### III

## The Benefit of Divine Grace

The following six passages are from *Tiruvārut Payan*.

### 1

#### Invocation

If to the good young Elephant<sup>1</sup> you betake yourself  
 Surely you will find arts and wisdom not arduous to acquire.

### 2

#### The Nature of the Supreme Lord

Like the "life letter"<sup>2</sup> A, as Wisdom stands He  
 In fullness all-pervading, God beyond compare. (1)

Indivisible in this Lord of ours from Satti<sup>3</sup>  
 That grants immortal spirits His own state to attain. (2)

1. Lord Ganesh  
 2. Vowel  
 3. Shakti, consort of Shiva



Excelling in greatness, yet most subtle,  
 So precious to possess, yet exceedingly gracious;  
 In all this is He without peer. (3)

He brings into being all things;  
 Them he provides the spirits (in accordance with their Karmam)<sup>1</sup>.  
 And He that undoes all to recede into Anavam's keep  
 Remains an unforsaking refuge. (4)

The One without form, and the One with form is He;  
 But to the wise, indeed, He Wisdom's form possesses. (5)

Unlike the way all priceless spirits learn  
 To discern (with God imparting to them from above)  
 Our God is one who has none at all above Him (6)

As unfailing Wisdom He never departs from His devotees  
 This Steadfast One whom even gods fail to find. (7)

In every place and in everything 'oned' He abides  
 As warmth pervades warm water.  
 Yet distinct is He; independent of all. (8)

No good is He to those that draw not near,  
 Exceeding good to them that do draw near,  
 Without partiality is He.  
 His name is Giver-of-Bliss. (9)

Such a One (as described in the above *kural*s),  
 without a doubt, He surely is;  
 Unceasing, Him as Wisdom, contemplate;  
 'Tis He the cure that rids recurring birth. (10)

*Pathimudhunilai*, 14th century

### 3

#### The Nature of the Finite Spirits

More numerous than the days already born,  
 As numerous as the days yet to be born

---

1. Karma

Are those that have renounced,  
And those that have yet to renounce. (11)

There are some with the triple Impurity<sup>1</sup>  
Others with one of these removed;  
Yet others there are with only one. (12)

Ever one is the three types is in Root-Impurity embedded  
The types without the appearances giving malady (Mayai)  
And those with appearance-inducing-melady (Karmam)  
Are a pair each. (13)

Daily whatever he (man) sees (in his awakened state)  
Does he confound in his dream state.  
What a feat for this mighty intelligence ! (14)

The name "intelligence" to your knowing-agent  
Which can know nothing without the senses (internal and external)  
Is fitting indeed ! (15)

To what purpose Light and Darkness,  
And the (Phenomenal) World,  
If the open eye lacks vision clear ? (16)

*Sat* (the Real) joins not with *asat* (the unreal)  
And *asat* cannot know *Sat*.  
That which partakes of both  
Is man's spirit which is *Sadasat* (*sat* + *asat*) (17)

Are there not in the world objects  
That with darkness become dark,  
But with light become luminous ? (18)

To them that see not with the Eye Divine  
Even the Light, as to the eyes of the owl,  
Is but intense darkness. (19)

What travail unfathomable endures alas  
The inept spirit from time immemorial !  
Oh, when will Grace (*Arul*) on it dawn !

*Uyiravainilai,*

## The Nature of the Evil of Darknesss

The woes of unrelenting rebirth  
And the Bliss,  
And the means supporting them  
Can in nowise be gainsaid. (21)

'Tis Darkness, none other; that reality which remains  
With all things with itself become one. (22)

Veiling all else, darkness shows its form (as darkness)  
But this one (Anavam) reveals neither one nor the other ! (23)

The Darkness, which was firmly entrenched  
Mingled from days of yore within the spirit,  
Has to this day continued to remain  
Along with the spirit's inner (hidden) Light. (24)

The chastity of this Damsel of Darkness is such  
That in spite of having many lovers,  
She hides that, and herself too.  
Even from her husband ! (25)

Why waste words: The plight of not knowing  
How to discern is the gift given by this Lady of Darkness ! (26)

If there is no Darkness, how explain pain ?  
If pain is connatural to the spirit (as you say)  
When it be removed, the spirit too would cease with it! (27)

If Asu (Anavam) has a beginning,  
How did it come to join the spirit ?  
Why, it is a malady that can silently seize  
The spirit even in *mukthi*-state (28)

However much the one may evolve, Darkness will never fade  
If (man's) spirit fails to garner the Light. (29)

Coming to man in bodily frame and all,  
In *Kanmam*'s wake, is *Mayai*  
Which is just like a lamp till the Dawn breaks. (30)

The Nature of Arul (Grace)

Nothing in the world is greater than Arul—  
Just as there is nothing more important to a man  
Than what he then direly needs. (31)

Universal as the great Effulgence of the Sun is Arul  
So that *Karmam* may unfold (as does the seed).  
And be consumed. (32)

The flesh can never know;  
Nor can the spirit (of itself) know anything.  
Unless this One (Arul) knows (and imparts),  
Who can ever know? (33)

As fish plunge for prey though they live in a sea of milk  
So too, spirits enveloped in Arul,  
Plunge time and again into the sea of delusion. (34)

As the wayfarer unaware of the guide that leads him.  
And as the senses five (unaware of the spirit by whom they perceive),  
So too the spirit fails to discern the Wisdom (that enables her to know). (35)

The wanderer thinks, "It is I that walk",  
Unconscious of the supporting earth :  
So too men fail to discern the Lofty One (who sustains them). (36)

Like those that find not the mountain (before them).  
Nor the earth beneath, or the sky above  
Are those that find not Wisdom.  
They would not even find their own heads  
These men who are lost to themselves. (37)

The plight of the one who remains under the  
imposter's (*Ahankaram's*) leadership  
Is as the man who remains perched-tongued in a flood.  
Or who is still in darkness when it has dawned everywhere. (38)

Lay agitation aside and listen to this (amusing) thing;  
This is like the cat seated at the pot of milk  
Which suddenly pounces on a passing rat  
To catch and enjoy it. (39)

*Mukthi* (attainment of Shivam) is a gift far beyond the  
 deserts of the inept spirit  
 Who has attained no relationship with Arul  
 Though She (Arul) has been so closely associated  
 With her (spirit) to this day ! (40)

*Aruladhunilai,*

6

The Nature of the Form-of-grace (Guru)

The One (Lord) who steadfastly sustained the spirit hidden  
 within her state of ignorance  
 Is this unforsaking Leader (Shiva) who has now become a  
 perceptible sign. (41)

For the malady of the one within (a home)  
 Only the One within can procure the cure.  
 Can the outsider in the street administer it ? (42)

Who in the world would ever know this Real One  
 Who, without presenting Himself (in knowable forms),  
 Had come to bestow His grace ? (43)

Those undiscerning, or in illusion steeped, or of evil intent  
 Can never behold the two Verities of Wisdom. (44)

As a decoy is presented other beasts to trap.  
 People fail to discern that it (the Guru-form) is only His cloak. (45)

"What is that to us ?" (You may ask !)  
 When you pray to One which he is a past master  
 Only then by Him can you be your problem released. (46)

For snake-poison (in the body) it is no use turning to the mongoose.  
 Only by the man who practises (mongoose's) anti-snake intent can you  
 . be saved.  
 In similar manner, Darkness is rid only by this One (Guru) (47)

He (Guru) would grant the spirits *Anavam's* removal  
 And imbue then with Arul;  
 He would also purge them of their *Karmam*.  
 To *sakalar* He would come in person and bestow grace. (48)

If this Great Wise One (Guru) that imparts  
The all-transcendent path does not come,  
Who can ever know it ? (49)

*Nanam* would as soon draw nigh to you without this One,  
As a flame would appear through a sunstone without the sun (50)

*Arulurunilai*

From *Tiruvart Payan*, 14th century

Tr. by Joseph Jaswant Raj

## The Aspirant for Salvation

### MANAVALA MAMUNIKAL

MANAVALA MAMUNIKAL (Maṇavāḷa Māmunika), 1370-?) was born at Alvar Tirunakari. In admiration of his stupendous scholarship he was called "Mamunikal" in his later days. His original name was Azhagiya Manavalan. He learnt *Nalayiram* and other *Rahasya Trayas* from Thirumalai Alvar. Like his guru he also admired Ramanujar, on whom he wrote a poem *Yadi Raja Vamsati*. Manavala Mamunikal was considered the incarnation of Anandalvan. He wrote an elaborate commentary on *Pillai Lokacharya's* works. He was mainly responsible for the establishment of the Tenkalai sect in Vaishnavism. There were eight disciples for him, who were called *Ashtadikkajankal*. *Upatesa Ratnamalai*, *Arti Prabhandham* and *Tiruvaymoli Narrantadi* are some of his works.

### 1

The aspirant to *moksha* (mumukshu) needs to know the three *rahasyas*.

A *mumukshu* is one who has a desire for moksha. Formed from the root (*muc*, to release) this word means "one in whom a desire for release from samsara has arisen." Even though one who has a desire for attaining the atman also has the quality of being a *mumukshu*, he is not referred to here. He has no need to know the three *rahasyas*. Therefore, by the word *mumukshu* (the author) means one who has a desire for the cessation of samsara due to his desire to attain the Lord.

Saying that such a person "needs to know the three *rahasyas*" means that since he has to know the soul's essential nature (*svarupa*), the means (*upaya*), and the goal (*purushartha*), and since these three *rahasyas* explain them correctly, he needs to know them. Indeed it is said, "The *mumukshu* must obtain three-fold knowledge—of himself, of the way to attainment (*prapaka*), and the goal to be attained (*prapya*). His reference to the three *rahasyas* will be clear later on when he says that these are the Tirumantra, Dvayam, and

Charamashloka. These are called "*rahasyas*" because they are supreme secrets explaining the essential meaning of the entire Vedanta. Thus with this sentence he has specified the *adhikari* and what he is to know.

Then, as to the question which of these three *rahasyas* is the first one, he says:

2

Among them, the First *Rahasya* is the Tirumantra.

Among the three *rahasyas*, the first to be known by the *adhikari* is the Tirumantra which deals with the nature of the soul as it truly is (*svarupayathatmya*) and which fosters full and perfect wisdom to discriminate between what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected. This mantra aims at explaining the soul's nature as it truly is, for, it explains (the soul's) three characteristics of (1) having subservience to no other (*ananyarhasheshatva*), (2) having no other as a refuge (*ananyasharanatva*) and (3) delighting in no other (*ananyabhogyatva*). It furthermore explains clearly the distinction between what is to be rejected and accepted according to these (characteristics of the soul). In the essential nature (*svarupa*) of one who has been well instructed by this mantra will arise the desire for the means (*upaya*) and the goal (*upeya*) that are explained by the other two mantras. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with claiming that (*svarupayathatmya*), is the first *rahasya*.

Furthermore, just as the rest of this mantra elaborates the Pranava [the *aum*], the Dvayam elaborates the rest of the Tirumantra, and the charamashloka elaborates the Dvayam. By this logic, its primacy is established. So, bearing all these reasons in mind, he proclaims, "The first *rahasya* is the Tirumantra." It is said, "Since it protects [verbal root tra] the one who meditates on it (*mantra*), it is called a "mantra". Thus this is called a "mantra" because it protects the one who meditates on it by both the power of its sound and the realization of its meaning. For one who follows the other paths to moksha (*upasaka*), and who uses it in sacred utterings and oblations and the like (*japa, homa*) it protects by the power of its sound. For the *prapanna* who considers the Lord alone to be the means and the goal (*upaya, upeya*), it protects by the power which comes from realizing its meaning. When one realizes its meaning, it becomes one's saviour or protector. Bhattar has said:

If he thinks that the soul is the body, the wise *prapanna* should learn the third syllable [in the *aum*]. If he is blind with autonomy, the first [a]. If subservient to another, the second [u]; if trying to protect himself, the word

“namah”. If hankering after those who only appear to be kinsmen, the word “narayana”. If his mind is involved in worldly matters, the dative case ending [on the word “narayana”].

This means that [the Tirumantra] guides the one who meditates on it to behave in accord with his true nature, making sure that [wrong notions such as] confusing the body and the soul (*dehatmabhinihana*), self-sufficiency or autonomy (*svatantrya*), subservience to another (*anyasheshatva*) seeking to Save oneself (*svarakshane svanaya*), and hankering for sense objects (*Vishayappravanya*) never occur again.

After this, with the intention to fully establish this *mantra*’s excellence, he reveals its excellence by stating the special way of meditating on it (*anusandhanakrama*).

### 3

As befitting the excellence of the Tirumantra, one must reflect on it respectfully, with love

The excellence of the Tirumantra lies in the following:

(1) It is a summation of all the Vedas, as described [in the passage], “The Rig, Yajus, Sama and Atharva—all are encompassed by the eight-syllabled [Tirumantra].”

(2) It explains all the truths which are to be known, as stated in the hymn, “Rather than speaking of other things.”

(3) It is the supreme mantra among mantras, the ultimate secret among secrets, the holiest among the holy, as stated [in the passage]:

“The eternal Mulamantra [Tirumantra] is the supreme mantra among mantras, the ultimate secret among secrets, the holiest among the holy.”

“As befitting its excellence” means in accord with its great worth. “One must reflect on it respectfully, with love,” means that when one meditates on it, it should not be done with an empty heart but with all the love one has for it, in recognition of its excellence. Furthermore, one should respect and cherish it so that this secret of secrets is not heard by those unqualified for it; for, it is said, “With effort one should protect the mantra.” This, [Pillai Lokacharya] says, is the way we have to meditate on it, thus ruling that one is not to reflect on it by any other method.

Is it only if one has such love for it that the mantra will succeed? To this he reveals:



## 4

If one has abundant love for the mantra, for the subject of the mantra, and for the *acharya* who bestows the mantra, it will succeed.

One should have abundant love, in accord with their respective excellence for the following: (1) this mantra which proclaims the truths to be known, (2) the Lord, the one to whom this mantra refers, [who should be loved] on account of his three forms as the master (*sheshi*), saviour (*sharanya*), and goal (*prapya*) and (3) the acharya who has helped one, [and should be loved] in proportion to one's love for the mantra, since the mantra is in the hands of the acharya. As it is said, "The mantra is under the control of the knower of Brahman." If one has [such abundant love] then this mantra will succeed for him. As it is said;

One should have devotion to these three – the mantra, deity, and the guru who gives the mantra – for this is the primary *sadhana*.

After this, by telling how this mantra appeared [in the world], he reveals its unsurpassed excellence.

## 5

Those in *samsara* have forgotten themselves and the Lord and have lost service to the Lord – it is so lost that they do not even know that they have lost it. Thus sunk in the sea of *samsara*, they suffer. The Lord of all, out of his mercy (*kripa*) — so that they might know him and reach the other shore — himself became both the disciple and the acharya and proclaimed the Tirumantra.

"Those in *samsara*" means those bound-souled (*baddhacetanar*) - who are experiencing the torments of birth and death, subjected to the flood of ignorance, karma, karmic tendencies (*vasana*), and desires because of their beginningless contact with insentient matter.

"Have forgotten themselves and the Lord" means that they do not know that they themselves are endowed by nature with the characteristic of subservience (*sheshatva*) to the Lord, as it is said:

All souls are by nature servants to the supreme spirit (*paramatman*). No other definition (*lakshana*) applies to them in bondage as well as in moksha.

Nor do they know the Lord to be their unconditional master (*nirupadhikasheshi*) as stated in such passages as, "Lord of all," and "The quality of being the Lord and owner inheres in Brahman." But why does he

say "have forgotten" rather than "don't know" ? Isn't the word "forgotten" used when one knew something at one time before and then lost that knowledge ? He says it this way only because he is thinking of the strength of the [*shesha-sheshi*] relationship, For it is [so strong] that if one realizes that inherent relationship, it seems like a forgotten truth one had previously known, as [the Alvar] said, "I forgot you before."

"And have lost service to the Lord" means that they have not been able to attain the supreme goal of serving the Lord who is ordained as their *sheshi* due to the aforementioned ignorance. He says "have lost" thinking of the great value of that service and how, though he was born only for [that purpose], he has gone without attaining it.

"It is so lost that they do not even know they have lost it" means that since they are without knowledge of their own true nature (*svarupa*) and that of the Lord, and since they are ignorant of the supreme goal, they don't regret the loss. They don't even think, "We have lost the supreme goal of service to the *sheshi* which is in accord with our subservience (*sheshatva*) "

"Thus sunk in the great ocean of samsara, they suffer." This means that they are sunk in the great ocean of samsara, the place of endless afflictions. [So wide] that its shores can't be reached by one's own efforts, it is described as "the terrible ocean of samsara, full of endless torments." Thus overcome by the three kinds of torments, they suffer in pain

So it has been stated that [the chetanas in samsara] (1) do not know themselves, (2) do not know the Lord, (3) are ignorant of the supreme goal, (4) while suffering in the ocean of samsara, do not realize that samsara itself is the obstacle, and (5) do not know the means (*upaya*) to get out of it. Thus this means they are completely ignorant of the five truths (*arthapanchaka*) which are to be known. As stated in such passages as "The nature of Brahman who is to be attained. . . ." all the scriptures propound the five truths. In order to make these truths easily understandable for [the chetanas], the Lord of all revealed the Tirumantra which is a summation of all the *shastras*. Below, it is told how he did this.

"The Lord of all, out of his mercy," refers to the Lord who, since time immemorial, has shared a relationship with everyone as Lord and subject (*isheshitavyasambandha*), as stated [in the passage], "since there is a beginningless relationship [between God and the soul] as Lord and subject. This means "Out of his uncaused mercy (*nirhetukakripa*), arising merely upon seeing the miseries [his subjects] are experiencing," as stated [in the following passage]:

For the soul, whirled around in the wheel of samsara by his karma, distraught with misery, unfathomable mercy springs forth from Vishnu.

"So that they might know him and reach the other shore" means so that those who are lying in the ocean of samsara, being tormented in this way, may know the one who is the means to get out. Thus they might cross over that sea of samsara. For it is said, "Having attained you as a refuge, men cross over, and "For those sunk in the ocean of samsara, with minds overrun by sense-objects, there is no way across at all but the boat called Vishnu."

"Himself became the disciple and the acharya" means he descended in the form of Nara and Narayana — with Nara as the disciple and Narayana as the acharya — described [in the hymn], "He who, as Nara Narayana, elaborated the book of dharma so that it would not be lost."

"And revealed the Tirumantra" means he proclaimed the Tirumantra which is the summation of all the shastras and which explains clearly and distinctly the five truths which are the essence of those shastras. [Pillai Lokacharya] does not say that [the Lord] composed [the Tirumantra] but "revealed" (*prakasippi*). This he does in order to show (1) that [the Lord] revealed it as something eternal and did not just compose something and proclaim it, and (2) that he revealed this profound secret because he could not bear seeing the difficult situations [of souls in samsara]

But isn't it enough for him to appear as an acharya and reveal it? Why did he become a disciple? To this he says:

## 6

The people of the world did not know how a disciple (Shishya) ought to be. Thus he became a disciple in order to make that known.

He did not only reveal this as an acharya. He himself also became the disciple. The people of the world did not know the characteristics of a disciple; that is, that he should (1) desist from other aims, (2) be eager to adopt the sadhana for this aim, (3) feel oppressed [by samsara and eager to get out of it (*arti*)], (4) be respectful and (5) have no jealousy (*anasuya*). This has been stated in the following passages:

One who is a believer, who conducts himself according to dharma, is of good character, a vaishnava pure, serious, clever, and steadfast should be considered a disciple (*shishya*).

One who bears his body, wealth, intelligence, house, actions, qualities, and breaths for the *guru* he and no other should be considered a disciple.

A disciple who has a pure mind, reverence for good people, and exemplary conduct; who is eager to know the truth, obedient, free of pride

(*tyaktamana*), self-effacing (*pranipatanapara*), inquisitive, composed and restrained, free of jealousy; who has passed a thorough examination, and is grateful — he should be taught the truth.

Therefore he made this known by his own conduct (*anushthana*). If he had revealed this only by teaching it, people might have thought, "He is only trying to show his own superiority." But when he made this known by his own conduct, it made it easier for them to say, "We also need this," and thus to gain faith and undertake it themselves.

Is it necessary to get [the required] knowledge in this way, by becoming a disciple and learning this mantra? Aren't the shastras, the "arts of knowledge," also ways to acquire learning? When one studies them, isn't knowledge gained by this method? Using an analogy, he reveals the difference between knowledge gained from the shastras and knowledge arising from this mantra.

7

Knowledge arising from all the *shastras* is like wealth earned by oneself. Knowledge arising from the Tirumantra is like inherited wealth (*patrikadhana*)

Knowledge which arises in the chetana from all the shastras teaching knowledge of reality — *shruti*, *smriti*, etc.— is like wealth one earns by oneself. That is, it can be obtained only by strenuous effort. But knowledge which arises from the Tirumantra — through the acharya's teaching — without effort. As it is said:

Shastric knowledge, which is very difficult, is the cause of mental vacillations. After realizing Hari by means of instruction one should retire from action.

Thus it has been stated that the Tirumantra, which is a summary of the shastras, is greater than the shastras themselves.

That may be so, but let us leave aside the shastras. This is not the only mantra relating to the Lord. Aren't there many more besides this one? With the intention to explain the excellence of this mantra compared to other mantras, he answers this doubt:

8

### The Lord's Mantras Indeed are Many

Let the number of your births, precipitated by a flood of your qualities, be as [innumerable] as those qualities.

Many, O King, are the auspicious qualities of your son. Of your endless qualities, just six are your primary qualities. O Arjuna, many births have passed for me, as well as for you. [He is] the one of eternal, immeasurable fame [or, qualities]. You have been born in all kinds of wombs.

As stated in such passages, the Lord's qualities, as well as his *avataaras* which are expressions of his qualities (*gunaparivdharupa*), are innumerable. In the same way, the mantras which are connected with these are also many as it is said "The Lord's mantras are many."

## 9

These [mantras] are of two kinds: *vyapaka* and *avyapaka*.

The two categories [of mantras] are the *vyapaka* (mantras) which explain the Lord's true nature as the one who pervades all (*sarvavyapaka*) and the *avyapaka* [mantras] which explain just one of the qualities of activities pertaining to his avataaras [but not his all-pervasiveness].

*Mumukshupadi*, 14th century

Tr. by Patricia Y. Mumme

## Villi Bharatam

## VILLIPUTTURAR

VILLIPUTTURAR (Villiputtūrār, 14th century) was born at Saniyur in Thirumuniappadinadu. Tradition says that he used to debate with men of false learning and cut off their ears as a mark of victory for him. He was patronised by *Varapati Aatkondan*, the chief of a local principality, and it was at the patron's request that the poet came to compose the epic *Villi Bharatam* (Villibhāratam).

His monumental work *Bharatam* has nearly 4000 verses written in *viruttam* metre. It is a fine poetical work which excels other Bharatams like *Perundevanar Bharatam* and *Nellappillai Bharatam* in many aspects. Eventhough he was a Vaishnavite Brahmin, he did not spare any pains to pray to and praise Lord Shiva.

Villiputturar's epic appeals not only to the scholarly and the elite but also to the uneducated masses. Many of the episodes in *Bharatam* are enacted in *Terukuthu*, the most familiar form of theatre in Tamil Nadu.

Two excerpts are given below:

## 1

## The Battle Scene

The limbs of soldiers lay strewn in the field  
and vultures circled above;

As groups of ghosts gathered plentiful food  
 it seemed to be a shopping mall;  
 Besides the bodies of kings fallen dead  
 lay their white umbrellas open;  
 Drums that resounded victory were now silent.  
 like dried up leaves. (49)

The head-covers of dead elephants gleamed  
 As lightning mid clouds;  
 There were streams flowing all over  
 from the ichor of their bones;  
 Arrows that struck the faces of pachyderms  
 passed right through their tails;  
 All those lifeless elephants lay around  
 as large, uprooted mountains. (50)

The bees that drew to the scarves of the beasts  
 were a spread of silk;  
 The goaded elephants that had faced the war  
 were now all dead;  
 The army of Yama's son Dharma waxed strong,  
 decimating the enemy;  
 Spirits gathered hither to dance in glee  
 at the abundance of corpses to eat. (51)

The bodies of brave kings in the battle  
 were now covered by arrows;  
 As the dead lay in their own caking blood  
 there was an overpowering stink;  
 The necks of elephant mahouts with fiery eyes  
 were cut off by discus-weapons;  
 And yet their lotus-like hands continued  
 to wield their swords. (52)

Innumerable the arrows that had pierced  
 the eyes of soldiers of the field;  
 The flaming eyes and smiling lips of the heroes  
 spread silvery moonlight around;  
 The brilliant armaments showering all over  
 seemed like overpowering sunlight;  
 Where are the fortress-walls that can compare  
 with this encircling, invincible army? (53)

The rain of arrows released by kings fell  
 on the lotus-hearts of the enemies;

The birds that feed upon carrion  
Gathered here with friendly jackals;  
The elephants fell dead like mountains  
whose wings had been just shorn;  
There drew close ghostly witches to dance  
prayers for goddess Kali. (54)

The blood that drained from the dying heroes  
stained the earth deep red;  
The stomachs of ghosts grew large  
like lakes of blood;  
The vultures that rose after feeding on earth  
veiled the skies above;  
The arrows flashed their sharp edges  
to pulverise limbs mercilessly. (55)

Innumerable male elephants lost their tusks  
and stood like their dames;  
Broken bodies lay thick like banks  
for the flowing river of blood;  
The chests of heroes were blasted by elephants  
as if they were lotus blooms;  
Their mountains-like shoulders were cut down  
by blood-stained swords. (56)

The arrows targeted themselves accurately  
cutting off intrepid, strong warriors;  
Where the headless trunks fell there sprouted  
deep lakes of blood;  
The skies that float over the seven worlds  
grew dark with rising dust;  
The ghosts that had wandered hungry  
were now given a grand feast. (57)

Russet waves rose up high in the field  
as from a newly created sea;  
Trunks continued to fight with the limbs  
full of wrath terrible;  
The hoofs of horses that step in five rhythms  
were now hopelessly destroyed;  
Pondering over the sight it was clear,  
the soldiers had learnt their art well. (58)

A clamour arose then from instruments like *tarai*,  
the flute, the horn, and the conch;

Within a second a group of elephants  
trampled down the cavalry;  
An expert archer need bend his bow but once  
to release a million arrows;  
The life of soldiers fled from their bodies  
to embrace heavenly damsels above. (59)

The ocean of blood grew clamorous  
with its high-rise waves;  
The chariots of gods prepared to speed fast  
high up in the sky;  
The fire of anger from the dead men's eyes  
sent up black smoke to the space;  
The hands of youth used for pacifying beloveds  
were now cut off mercilessly. (60)

Ichor-dripping elephants denuded of trunks  
Stood now as mere swine;  
Their toe-nails gleamed on earth as light  
streaming from the full moon;  
The eyelets of lance-wielding heroes  
were now gouged out by crows;  
A variety of spears drew out the intestines  
of immense, killer-elephants. (61)

The garlands worn by the soldiers dripped  
plentiful honey for the bees;  
The diadomed snakes that hold up the earth  
grew weak due to pressure from above;  
The shoulders, eyes and chests of heroes  
were dotted with arrows;  
A line of ghosts ate to satiety the fat,  
brains and long intestines of the dead. (62)

From *Villibharatam*, 14th century

Tr. by Prema Nandakumar

## The Story of Karna

### *Krishna in Disguise Begs a Gift of Karna*

"O scion of bright-rayed sun the steeds of whose mighty car  
prance in splendour ! I wrought *tapas* in Meru;



By penury I suffered; I heard it said that you give freely  
 To them that languish in this earth which is  
 Girt with the dark ocean-streams of dashing waves,  
 whatever they seek after; so have I come to you.  
 Be pleased to give me now, even now  
 what is possible for you to give."

When thus the Brahmin spake, he whose body was  
 Enfeebled by the ever-triumphant and fierce darts  
 Or Arjuna and he who was about to fall down on the car,  
 Heard those nectarean words and said; "Nobly spoken !"  
 Then he smiled and said: "What is it I can give you,  
 pray, tell me," Hearing this, the one versed in the four vedas  
 Said: "Confer on me truly all your *punya*."  
 At this, Karna's mind rejoiced in delight great.

"My breath is about to quit; I know not if life  
 Now abides within or without my body; you have not  
 Chosen to come when this sinner was able to give  
 All things that the seekers were after; I give to you absolutely  
 All my *punya*; be pleased to receive it.  
 If indeed even the One on the lotus is no match for you  
 Can my *punya* equal my gift to you ?"

Thus he spake and folded his hands  
 In adoration; at this Kannan—  
 Verily a thunderbolt to them that hail Him not—,  
 Eyed him in joyous love and said:  
 "May your gift be ritualistically attested  
 By the pouring of water from your hand."  
 Then Karna, with the ruddy blood that seeped  
 Out of his wound in his bosom, pierced by a dart,  
 Made the gift. Kannan who of yore, received  
 From the roseate hand of Mahabali, the Asura,  
 The water of gift, and with it, seized the triple worlds,  
 Now received from Karna his gift made with blood.

*Krishna Bids Karna to Seek the Boon Desired by Him*

Kannan, the Muni, rejoiced at this, and addressing  
 The richly-garlanded king (Karna) said;  
 "Now tell me of the boons you desire; I'll grant  
 Them to you." When thus told, Karna— the son

Of Surya said: "If I am still destined  
To get embodied owing to cruel Karma,

In all such births to which I am subject,  
Let me not say "no" to them that betg  
Of me, driven by want; it is with  
such a heart I should be endowed."

*Krishna Grants the Boon*

When the Lord whose single form encompasses  
The triple forms of the Triune Gods  
Heard these truthful words of His aunt's son Karna,  
His lotus-heart burgeoned in joy;  
With His flower-soft hands, He embraced him  
Tight, chest gluing to chest; He bached him  
With His tears of mercy that flowed from His eyes—  
Verily lotus-flowers—, and said:  
"What though the number of your births be,  
Munificence and opulence will ever  
Mark them; in the end (by My Grace)  
You will attain the Bliss of Release.

*Krishna Reveals His Form to Karna*

The one aeviternal who never becomes  
or disbecomes, the one that wears  
The ever-fresh garland of *tulsi* leaves,  
Assumed the very form with which  
He presented Himself, of yore, before Gajendra  
caught by the teeth of the Death-like crocodile.  
His dark hue was not to be matched  
By the nimbus that sucked full the sea-water.  
His hands held the pentad of His weapons;  
Thus, even thus, he appeared before Karna who,  
With delighted eyes and folded hands, hailed Him.

*Karna Rejoices*

The Devas, the other celestials, Indra—the King of Devas,  
The four-faced Brahma seated on the Lotus  
And the Munis beholding Him, hailed Him  
with fresh-blown and golden *karpaka* blooms.

In his ecstasy, Karna mused thus; "Lo, it is  
 given to me to fall down on the battle-field  
 By the darts of Arjuna, and at this hour, behold  
 The roseate-eyed Narayana, the perfect perfection."

*Karna Hails Krishna*

"Ha, I have, by your grace; come by the unique fruit  
 that is not to be obtained  
 By doing great *yagas* in the rare and great fire,  
 By having ablutions in holy rivers like the Ganga,  
 By remaining ever-poised in *yoga* amidst the five fires  
 By performing flawlessly *archana* with *beauteous* blooms,  
 By doing *pooja* with an upright and pure heart,  
 By clearly beholding you who are immanent in all things,  
 In the lotus of the heart, and  
 By doing aplenty many a rare *tapas*  
 forsaking all the joys of the phenomenal world  
 well-nigh impossible of performance.

"Your hue is like the lofty hill of sapphire,  
 The nimbus, the vast sheet of sea-water  
 And the *kaya* bloom; the mighty mace, the sword,  
 The conch, the disc and the bow of prowess  
 Are borne by you; your chest sports the garland  
 Of suaveolent *tulsi*; strong and shapely are  
 Your shoulders; your neck is a jewel; ruddy are  
 Your lips; like a fresh-blown lotus is your face;  
 Your crown is a riot of brilliance. Lo, I behold  
 These now, even now, in this my present life !

"O ruddy-eyed Vishnu who, of yore, crawled  
 Through the *Maruta* trees !  
 In the formidable field of battle, for the sake  
 Of my friend—dear to me as life,  
 I fought against Dharma and his loving brothers.  
 It is thus, even thus, I repaid my debt to him  
 That fed and fostered me, these very many years,  
 My highly-treasured cuirass and ear-pendants  
 I gifted to the king of Devas; to you I gave away  
 The fruit of all my great *punya*. Lo, now  
 I am alone and apart ! Who on earth indeed  
 Has wrought such wondrous *tapas* like me !"

*Krishna Apprises Karna of Past Events*

When thus the son of Surya hailed Him in joy,  
 Kannan who, while grazing kine, in the *mullai* realm  
 Smote an Asura that stood in the form of a calf,  
 Spake to him thus; "It was I who bade Indra  
 Secure your cuirass and ear-pendants; again  
 It was I who apprised Kunti of the truth  
 Of your birth and made her secure from you  
 The promise to ply but once the Nāgāstra.

"It was I who foster true compassion for you,  
 That tilted and sank the chariot into the earth  
 To save Arjuna from death". This said,  
 He who is all the oceans, all the mountains,  
 All the worlds, all the Devas and all humankind  
 And all the things—animate and inanimate—,  
 The one that looted the soft habiliments, the modesty  
 The streaked and lovely bangles and also  
 The innocence of the young cowherdresses,  
 Once again become Arjuna's charioteer.

*Krishna Bids Arjuna to kill Karna*

Then He bade Arjuna thus; "Before the sun dips  
 Into the western main, you should kill  
 The son of Surya." At this the martial Arjuna  
 Fixed the puissant dart "Anjarikam"  
 To his bow and so plied it towards its target—  
 The chest of Karna—, that all the heroes  
 Of this world applauded him in admiration.  
 Like the unfailing words of the pure ones,  
 The dart sped, pierced through his chest

And struck the ground. Down fell Karna.  
 The one renowned for his munificence structured  
 In his eyes as well as heart, the divine  
 And merciful form of the Lord Purushottama as borne  
 On the beauteous shoulders of Garuda;  
 He chanted His divine name in utter clarity;  
 Karna's body pressed down by the showered shafts  
 Now became cool; all the kings stood circling him;  
 The ruler of the world—the blind one's son—,  
 Grieved-beyond measure; it was thus that Karna  
 Lay on his golden chariot with ebbing life.

Thus spake the unbodied voice; "By the dart  
 Of Arjuna who fought fronting him,  
 He (Karna) that is elder than the Pandavas,  
 With his head a-tilt, has fallen down, this day.  
 His life will flit before the dusk dies out."

At this, tear-flooded, mind-melting and hair  
 Dancing loose, came running and lamenting aloud  
 Kunti, beating her head with both her hands.  
 Down she fell on Karna—her first-born.

### *The Lament of Kunti*

"That very day when by grace of the lovely Surya,  
 I gave birth to you in my virgin's chamber  
 In the palace of my father, I, the graceless one,  
 Laid you in a golden box and cast you  
 To drift on the waters of the Ganga.

When you became the bosom-friend of him  
 Who by a ruse vanquished the Pandavas,  
 And annexed their realm, I but felt glad.  
 When I heard of your heroism, I rejoiced  
 At the fruit of my goodly *tapas*.

O my son, are you now on your way to the world  
 Of the celestials to become their sovereign ?

"Even the generous clouds dread your munificent hands  
 Dharma—the one ever-poised in Dharma—, and his  
 Brothers are your younger brothers; Duryodhana  
 Whose flag sports a serpent and his brothers;  
 Ninety-nine strong, are all your younger brothers;  
 These would carry out your wishes divining them;  
 You could have ruled over the entire world peer lessly  
 Under the shade of a single parasol.  
 Yet by a conspiracy of fate and divine Maya  
 You die unfulfilled, alas, alas !"

### *Kunti Manifests her Love for Karna*

The consort of Pandu of Kuru-Nadu where  
 In all its hills, young and lovely peacocks,  
 Spreading their fan-tails dance, lamented thus,  
 The princes in the battle-field that hearkened  
 To her words, were struck with wonder; great was her wailing.  
 With her hands she embraced him in love;

She suckled him (in the wide-open battle-field).  
 Like the cow that grieves at the death  
 Of her newly-delivered calf, she grieved and grieved,  
 Assailed at once by misery and bewilderment.

### *The Beatification of Karna*

The body of Karna—the king of Anga—, lay  
 On the hands, lap and body of his mother;  
 His soul like into an obelisk of gold, resplendent  
 With the built-in puissance of lightnings  
 Wrought by the divine Architect Viswakarma  
 To support firmly the ethereal vault,  
 Rose up, ready to course its way through Surya  
 And gain the lofty and destined beatitude.

From *Villi Bharatam*, 14th century

Tr. by T. N. Ramachandran

## Selections

### ARUNAKIRINATHAR

ARUNAKIRINATHAR (Arunāgirināthar, 14th century) was a highly gifted poet, with a talent for composing highly rhythmic songs. He is regarded as the chief exponent of the Kumara sect, devoted to the worship of Lord Muruga. It is said, he led an amorous life with the prostitutes in his youthful days and turned over a new leaf by the Lords's grace. He seemed to have lived during the time of Prabudha Deva, who was the ruler of Karnataka. Villiputturar was his contemporary.

The lyrical songs of Arunakirinathar which are called *Thiruppugal* are more than 11,000 in number. Traditional scholars believed that he sang about 36,000 verses. In the first part of his songs Arunakiri describes the inferior nature of pleasure with women and in the later part he extols the greatness of bhakti and the adventures of Lord Muruga.

*Thirupugal*, *Kandar Alankaram*, *Kandar Anubhuti*, *Thiruvakuppu* and *Kandar Antadi* are his poetical works. *Kandar Alankaram* (Kandar Alankāram, The Beauty of Skanda) is a moving work of 100 poems full of sensuous images. *Kandar Anubhuti* (Kandar Anubhūti, The Perception of Skanda) describes the mystical experience of the poet.

## 1

### Quiescence and Passion

Once I tasted the sweetness of that One Supernal Bliss

Which grew from true love's  
 constant contemplation  
 on Kumaran  
 Who caressed the breast  
 of the innocent girl  
 who watched over the millet  
 in the great green fields;  
 from that day on  
 even sugar-cane seemed sour  
 and rich honey wretchedly bitter

(6)

\*

Six-faced preacher !  
 What a marvel  
 that you have come  
 to clearly tell us  
 of the unique Emptiness  
 of primordial space  
 and the blissful honey  
 nectared from grace  
 on the mountain  
 radiant with wisdom !

(8)

It is possible to tell  
 of that truth  
 which is not sky, nor wind, nor fire  
 nor water, nor earth  
 Which is neither it nor I  
 neither formed nor formless;  
 the truth  
 preached to me that day  
 by the Lord of Valli  
 whose voice  
 is far sweeter than  
 honey or syrup ?

(9)

O Valorous Lord  
 whose mountainous shoulders  
 embraced the virtuous Valli,  
 whose lips, red as *kovvai* fruit  
 issued words sweet as the *kolli rakam*,

O Velan,  
 you steered me to the very verge  
 of quiescence

where one is lost to all  
beyond all speech ! (10)

O Shanmukam  
whose twelve hands clapped  
and cut in two the eight mountains  
shook Meeru  
and saved the gods,

deliver me,  
of adhesive mind,  
from rampant senses  
which lead to a life  
of degenerate attachment. (14)

✱

O mind,  
won't you go and hide,  
quiescent,  
at the lotus feet—  
decked with anklets of *verci* blossoms—  
the feet of the Lord  
praised by Vedas and Agamas,  
where there is neither enlightenment  
nor ignorance  
and hypocrisy is absent? (17)

Lauding the Lord  
of the sharp shining lance,  
share with the poor  
at least a particle of rice,  
knowing that wealth helps you  
make your eternal journey  
no more than your shadow  
shelters you from the heat of the sun. (18)

O king,  
with sharp,  
Krauncha—piercing lance,  
your breast garlanded with *katampu* blossoms,

when I begin to contemplate you  
and attain silence,  
I subjugate the *gunas*



forget the self  
and become oblivious of the body. (19)



Foolish folks  
who think you can live in this world  
without surrendering  
at the feet  
of Him  
whose banner is the cock !

Relentless Fate,  
the fruit of your *karma*,  
does not let you enjoy your wealth;  
if you bury it deep within the earth  
will it follow you when you are gone ? (20)



○ Light glowing  
on sacred mount Chenkottai  
God with pointed lance,  
I will not forget you.  
Come and save me  
before this frame  
with two legs and arms  
housing my five senses  
degenerates. (23)



Hey, blind death !  
Come, at an arm's length !  
and see what happens !  
Did you see the  
glittering  
guileless  
that destroys the awareness  
of I, mine and you held  
by this slave of Velavan,  
Lord of Chentil ?

It can attack and cut you,  
make you suffer,  
and knock down your club and hook. (25)



Lord Kumara,  
your feet  
ringed with various anklets—  
*chilampu*, *chatankai*, and *tantai*—  
with your six faces,  
shoulders,  
and *katampu* garlands  
come and appear before me,  
what could an inauspicious day do—  
or *karmā*  
or asterisms directed against me  
or even death itself?

(38)



As fields and gardens  
of Chentur  
were destroyed by celfisht<sup>1</sup>  
the lust for women  
was removed  
by love  
for the honey  
of *Katampu*.  
As Sea, Churan, and mountain  
were overcome  
by the lance  
of the peacock-mounted one,  
the signature of Brahma  
on my brow  
was blotted out  
by His feet.

(40)



When this shack of flesh,  
standing on two legs  
with curved back and hanging hands,  
tied up with nerves  
walled with skin  
and sustained by the ten winds  
departs,

---

1. Red-coloured fish.

there is no refuge  
but the feet  
of the Lord  
who pierced the mountain  
with His lance.

(44)

\*

Those who do not sing  
out of true love  
for Murukan,  
who yearn for  
the breasts of the huntress,  
who do not share  
their wealth  
while they have it  
but amass and bury it;  
they waste their life-time  
worrying  
and are shocked  
when it is stolen  
and pine sorrowfully  
for more.

(53)

\*

O Death,  
who comes on the buffalo,  
I will not let you go  
cutting you to shreds without  
while the whole world watches

I stand in the presence  
of the Red Lord  
who fought the ferocious Churan

Depart from me  
with all your host;  
the sword of Shakti  
is in my hand.

(64)

\*

That my eyes may see  
what is worthwhile

they look at the Lord's tender  
flower feet;

That my mouth may speak words  
that are truth alone  
it utters the names of Murukan;  
That my earlier *Karma* be overruled  
I rely on his twelve shoulders;  
lest my final trek  
be lonely and dreadful  
the lance and peacock  
of Chenkottai's Lord  
accompany me.

(70)

•

Something  
which has no going nor coming  
day nor night  
in nor out  
word, form, nor end  
comes again and again  
to me  
overwhelms my mind  
and envelops me.  
the bliss it brings is inexpressible,  
O Lord of six faces !

(73)

From *Kandar Alankaram*, 14th century

Tr. by Fred Clothey

2

The Mystic Knowledge of Skanda

*Invocation*

We will bow at the feet of the five-armed God  
To perfect the garland woven with choice words  
Devoted to Shanmuka who bestows grace on the seekers of refuge  
So as to melt the hardened stone of the heart.

1

Bless me with the power of poetry as my duty  
Praising the dancing peacock, the spear and the cock

The brother of the peerless elephant who won in the war  
The monster with the elephant face.

## 2

O Muruka, the Lord of Suras,  
Are you not the marvel who spends his time  
In the yogas of joy and sorrowlessness,  
Speak of the well-being in which I lost myself giving up everything.

## 3

Shanmuka, which is the abiding reality,  
The sky or earth, fire or air ?  
The dawn of wisdom or the four vedas spoken  
Is it "me" or the mind or the place that ruled over me ?

## 4

Is it proper that I perish in the web  
Of women wearing bangles and the children ?  
God of spears that penetrated the heart and the hills  
Of the demon who rose with his branching kinsmen ?

## 5

Not liberated even by uttering the name of the god of six faces,  
Which can dispel the great illusion,  
Why do I linger in the illusion of the world  
Which beguiles with earth, gold and women ?

## 6

Will not the lotus of your lovely feet  
Bloom in my hardened stony heart ?  
The ocean of compassion as well as limitless passion  
Seeking the commands of Valli to serve at her feet.

## 7

Vanish, O mind, listen to the path of salvation  
Give, without hiding anything; think of the feet of the god of the spear.  
Which will burn into particles the great sorrow of being  
And be liberated from all evil karmas.

8

The god of youth and the son of the Princess of the Himalaya,  
One who vanquished in war the demons,  
And uttered the abiding reality  
That dispels the illusion of earth, kinsmen and ego,

9

When shall I forfeit the gift of being trapped  
In the charm of bewitching damsels with fragrant hair.  
The fierce one who threw the spear to pierce  
The poisonous hill, one who frees from sorrow and fear !

10

When the god of time, or of Death, comes on buffalo's back  
You will encounter it, riding on a chariot;  
The God wearing garlands on the chest  
And the spear that pierces the mango tree of Sur  
Who was the enemy Talari

11

One who proclaims the reality which can stall death  
When kinsmen asomble and mourn noisily,  
The god of spear residing in the hills of Naga,  
And giver of creativity for four kinds of poetry;  
The rare jewel of the heavenly world,

12

The thief who stole the daughter of the red goddess,  
Lord Muruka who is beyond both birth and death,  
Said you; "Simply be, and speechless";  
What a wonder ! I knew "nothing" whatsoever.

13

Those who know not with his grace  
Know not that Muruka wearing the peerless spear is our Kuru;  
It is neither form nor formless;  
It neither "is" nor "is not";  
It stood as neither darkness nor light.

## 14

O, Mind, be liberated at the feet of Muruka  
 And give up the desire that flows through  
 The five gates of the body, mouth, eyes,  
 The nose as well as the ears.  
 As form formlessness; as being and nothingness.  
 As the bud and blossom; as the jewel and radiance;  
 As embryo and life; as refuge and destiny,  
 And as Kuru, come and bless us, O Kuha !

From *Kandar Anubhuti*, 14th century

Tr. by K. Chellappan

## Songs

## SHIVAVAKKIYAR

SHIVAVAKKIYAR is one of the most popular figures in the line of Siddhas. There is one legend about him; Shivavakkiyar studied several religions in his young age and became an authority on Shaiva philosophy. He toured the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu spreading Shaivism. But when he happened to meet Peyalwar at Mylapore, there came a sudden change in him. Since then he came to be known as Tirumalisai Alwar. But we do not find any evidence for the legend. He can be placed at a date later than the 13th century. The songs of Shivavakkiyar had been collected by the end of the last century, and placed as the first section of an anthology known as "*The Collected Works of the Eighteen Siddhars*". The use of complex symbols, employment of the repetition of numbers and addressing the people in a sarcastic language are some of the traits of his poetry.

Within the Five Realized Sounds  
 there is the Universe and the Unlimited Ones  
 Within the Five Realized Sounds  
 there are the three Primeval Ones  
 Within the Five Realized Sounds  
 there is the Beginning and the Illusion of Creation  
 Within the Five Realized Sounds  
 there is All and Everything.

(2)

He is not Hari, He is not Lord Shiva.  
 He is the Ultimate Cause.  
 In the Beyond of Beyond,  
 Transcending Blackness, Redness, and Whiteness.  
 Immovable.  
 Try to understand;  
 He is not big, He is not small.  
 He is Infinite Distance,

Immovable,  
Transcending even  
Supreme Quiescence.

(9)

•

The Supreme and Eternal Skill  
is neither Above nor Below.  
How can you build the Palace  
without the Carpenter's Work ?  
You fools who sell your own mothers  
and become enslaved !  
There is no life without the Powers,  
none whatever !

(15)

•

The slothful  
    sluggards  
    say: He is far, far, far,  
    away !  
But the Supreme It  
is spread everywhere  
on Earth and in Heavens.  
O you poor dumb ones,  
running  
stunned and suffering  
through towns and fields and forests  
in Search !  
He is right there  
within you !  
Stand still  
and feel Him,  
feel !

(27)

•

What are temples, tell me !  
And what are sacred tanks ?  
O you poor slaves who worship  
in temples and tanks ! - -  
Temples are in the mind.  
Tanks are in the mind.  
There is no Becoming,  
there is no Unbecoming;  
None, none whatever !

(33)





In bricks and in granite,  
in the red-rubbed lingam,  
in copper and brass  
is Shiva's abode-

that's what you tell us,  
and you're wrong.

Stay where you are  
and study your own selves.

Then you will BECOME  
the temple of God.

full of His dance and spell  
and song.

(34)



In the Four Eternal Vedas,  
In the study and reading of scripts,  
In sacred ashes and in Holy Writs

And muttering of prayers  
You will not find the Lord !

Melt with the Heart Inside  
and proclaim the Truth.

Then you will join the Light—  
Life without servitude.

(36)



What does it mean—a Pariah woman ?

What is it—a Brahmin woman ?

Is there any difference in flesh,  
skin, or bones?

Do you feel any difference when you sleep  
with a Pariah or a Brahmin woman ?

(38)

Milk does not return to the udder once it has trickled out.  
Churned butter does not enter butter-milk.  
the sound of the conch does not come to life  
once it has been broke.

The blown flower, the fallen fruit,  
they do not jump back on the tree.

The dead

are not reborn !

Never, Never, Never.

(46)

By the true understanding of om namashivayame,  
 and having grasped the Truth,  
 by the true understanding of om namashivayame  
 when the Truth shines clear,  
 by the true understanding of om namashivayame,  
 and having grasped the Truth.  
 the OMNAMASHIVAYAME rests united with the Self in the heart ! (106)

\*

Like a lightning  
 arising  
 spreading  
 receding  
 and concealed,  
 so that Lord of my heart  
 arose  
 and spread  
 and is concealed  
 within  
 Like the eye  
 which does not know its own straight sight,  
 I do not know that Lord  
 Who is within me.  
 As if he were  
 not there ! (121)

\*

Like so many forms He stands, by reason of the sound *a*, having dressed  
 Himself in shapes of reason of sound *u*, the illusory world, by reason of the  
 sound *ma* the Shivayam became realized by reason of the sound *shi*. (221)

Silence, unmoved and rising,  
 Silence, unmoved and sheltering,  
 Silence, unmoved and permanent,  
 Silence, unmoved and brilliant,  
 Silence, broad and immense like the Ganga,  
 Silence, unmoved and increasing,  
 Silence, white and shining like the Moon,  
 Silence, the Essence of Shiva. (332)

\*

O you who proclaim yourselves the yogins of knowledge,

Who search after knowledge in books !  
 You do not know your own hearts !  
 There you should search for the light of knowledge ! (453)



The true mantra is the one which rests in the Light:  
 the mantra of Calm has taken shape and become a form,  
 the white mantra rose and ripened and became the sacred Ash,  
 for the true mantra is only one: Shivayame. (486)



Why, you fool,  
 do you utter mantras,  
 murmuring them, whispering,  
 going around the fixed stone  
 as if it were God,  
 putting garlands of flowers around it ?  
 Will the fixed stone speak—  
 as if the Lord were within ?  
 Will the cooking vessel,  
 or the wooden ladle,  
 know the taste of curry ? (496)



What miserable life,  
 O Lord,  
 who dances the dance  
 surrounded by dogs  
 in the loveless jungle  
 where demons gather  
 to feed on corpses !  
 If you truly seek  
 and try  
 to get rid of the Desire  
 which swells with the milk of mothers,  
 then look inside  
 and see what is hidden there,  
 wide;  
 a whirlwind of  
 agony  
 and pain  
 and miseries. (500)

Stone, silver, copper, iron.  
 Out of the alloys of these base metals  
 different shapes were fashioned  
 and forms shaped  
 of almighty gods,  
 and in praising them  
 one will achieve  
 happiness.  
 Is that what you say ?  
 No, no, no, no !  
 The Lord  
 is not an idol !

(522)

*Shivavakkiyar Patalkal*, 14th century

*Tr. by Kamil Zvelebil*

## Poems

### PATTINATTAR III

The following three poems are by Pattinattar III (Paṭṭinattār, 14th-15th century).

#### I

Ponder, O mind, ponder, O mind !  
 On Shiva the Lord, on Him of ruddy auric Ambalam  
 Ponder, O mind, ponder O mind !  
 Foster not the false worldly life that is  
 Like unto mirage and drifting wind,  
 Those that are born will die;  
 Those that are dead will get born;  
 Those that appear will disappear;  
 Those that disappear will reappear;  
 Those that are fat will waste;  
 The wasted will grow fat;  
 The remembered will be forgotten;  
 The forgotten will be remembered;  
 The united will part; the parted will unite;  
 What is liked will be detested;  
 The detested will be liked;  
 All these you have realized,  
 Moreover,  
 In birth after birth you killed all  
 And all killed you;

You ate all and all ate you;  
 You begot all and all begot you;  
 You fostered all and all fostered you;  
 You joyed in wealth and sorrowed in penury;  
 You abode in Paradise as well as Hell;  
 You experienced joy and misery in this world;  
 With either of these you were linked ceaselessly  
 You deemed the body a mere bubble, a nest,  
 A booth, a quarantined retreat, a *nidus*  
 For twofold deeds to breed and operate,  
 Strong as rock,

In this:

Rheum and liquid issue from an organ;  
 Ceaseless wax is exuded by another;  
 Phlegm and fluid seep out of another;  
 Saliva and mucus drip out of another;  
 Wind and excrement are expelled by another;  
 Water and pus pour out of another;  
 This frame, within and without, both stink;  
 In the end is it burnt up and reduced to bones.

In your inner consciousness,

Ponder on this, your life.

On the Lord of matted hair that is  
 Decked with fragrant *konrai* flowers  
 Meditate and get one with  
 The ceaseless felicity of auspicious bliss immense;  
 Be like unto the shadow that never parts.

To rid yourself of "I-ness," body-consciousness,  
 The blemish of twofold karma, birth and death,  
 Delusion and darkness, night as well as day  
 And the life here and hereafter,  
 Meltingly contemplate, like the lac  
 That melts in the fire,  
 The First One, the flame that spirals up in Tillai,  
 The Sovereign of Ambalam, the Lord of blissful dance,  
 Shiva that shines in Tiruchitrambalam.

Ponder O mind, ponder O mind !

On Shiva the Lord, On Him ruddy auric Ambalam

Ponder O mind, ponder O mind !

## II

I but long for the bodies of women  
 Whose eyes reach their ears and whose hips  
 Enflesh wounds; I have not come by the blessing

That will enable me to wear (on my crown)  
 Your lotus-feet twain; yet may You still  
 Abide close to me to rid me of my misery.  
 My body is like;  
 A jungle where roam hither and thither  
 A pentad of robbers causing commotion.  
 A Karmic closet of urine and faeces,  
 A hamlet where dwell wind, bile and phlegm,  
 A contraption of dirty dermis and blood,  
 A stinking vessel, a nine-holed flesh lump  
 That is four cubits long,  
 A basket of wild and bitter gourds,  
 A top spun by the rope of desire in this world-  
 Verily a crematorium and a huge protuberance,  
 A locus of endless maladies, a roving bark,  
 A form of Maya, a nest of Death,  
 A bellows filled with food, a heap of chaff  
 Fit to be winnowed by wind,  
 A noisy paper-kite wind-tossed,  
 A log destined to be felled by Death,  
 A shirt sewn by the four-faced tailor,  
 A feast for some, baked in the funeral pyre,  
 A dry leaf charred by fire,  
 A tuber with fair rind by worms eaten  
 A forked pole for the climbing of birth, the liana,  
 An ephemeral, nuptial splendour that in the end  
 Turns into a lump of dead flesh,  
 A fore torment, when dead,  
 That cannot be suffered to abide in its own town,  
 A heap of fluff before the wind,  
 A thick fog before the rising sun,  
 A rainbow that dangles on high,  
 A rare shadow of rumbling cloud,  
 A watery bubble, a writing on water,  
 A vision dreamed when eyes are shut,  
 A much worse magic flaw than even that.  
 Enough, enough, enough of this, Oh Lord !  
 It truly becomes Your Grace to reveal unto me  
 Your dance of bliss, hailed rapturously  
 By the daughter of Himavant  
 And thus claim and rule me for ever.

III

I seek refuge in You, O Shiva whose throat

Holds as though it were, the venom  
 Churned out of the milky ocean !  
 I seek refuge in You, O Shiva who with Your foot  
 Quelled the vile murderous Death who quells all!  
 I seek refuge in You, O Shiva who having plucked  
 Holds in Your left hand the head of Him  
 Who created the whole world!  
 I seek refuge in You, the opulent One  
 Of ruddy auric Ambalam !  
 O Lord, I seek refuge in You !  
 Your slave seeks refuge in You !  
 The mind that knows not the Truth  
 The intellect that is engendered by Aanava Mala  
 And is thither immersed and wallows there  
 Like the crawling fat-engendered worm  
 Deceit, sin and blameworthy thought,  
 Error, envy, miserliness, forgetfulness,  
 Thievery, falsehood, fraud, murder resulting  
 From ire immense, cursed baseness,  
 Enmity, fear, false confidence, trepidation,  
 The nescience of the three gunas, the attachment  
 Of the five senses, trouble and illness:  
 Of these are wrought the human body—  
 A nest from which the bird wings away,  
 A leaky hut made up of bones knit with nerves  
 And woven of flesh and fat, and eyrie  
 Of brittle strength put up by blood and worms,  
 A pot of faeces, a bottle of flesh,  
 A miserable bottomless pit of food,  
 A magazine of deadly weaponry,  
 A heap of many a tumultuous deed,  
 A worn-out bag of holes that cannot  
 Hold its contents,  
 A smith's bellows that fans the fire of wrath  
 An avian haunt for five birds, the senses,  
 An orchard for ever yielding fruits of misery,  
 A top spun by the rope of desire,  
 A fan that is twirled by cash, by money,  
 A deluding fan in the form of kin and deeds,  
 A wheel rolled by a hurricane,  
 A cruel vessel that plies the main of birth  
 And reaches the shore of evil  
 With all its sin-laden goods, tossed by desire,

An abode where the soul dwells with the twin beasts  
 Of Karma, a woven assemblage that shudders  
 At the Advent of Death-;  
 At the time when  
 I should into corpse turn and depart  
 I seek refute in Your lotus-feet;  
 I seek refuge in You  
 I seek refuge in You, O Lord whose mount  
 Is the white Bull of Martial gait  
 That flares up hearing the rumbling  
 Of thunder in the sky !  
 I seek refuge in You, O Lord of Unwinking eyes !  
 I seek refuge in You, O Lord, easy of access  
 To your devotees !  
 I seek refuge in You, O Lord who dances  
 In Tillai-Ambalam of the Brahmins,  
 And who is a sea whose waves waft mercy !  
 The celestials and the sages come to You  
 And hail You, and You with Your Consort—  
 Verily a flowery liana-bestow on them grace !  
 I seek refuge in Your feet twain !  
 O King of Ambalam!  
 You are for ever my refuge !

*Pattinattar Patalkal*, 14th-15th century

*Tr.* by T. N. Ramachandran

### Three Poems

#### PAMPATTI SITTHAR

Three religious poems addressed to the snake by PAMPATTI SITTHAR (Pāmpāṭṭi Sitthar, 15th century) are given below. No information is available about him; he was most probably a snake-charmer.

#### 1

#### The Snake's Traits

On Shiva's crown settled you are, O snake !  
 The poison-pouch you have, O snake !  
 You dwell in abysmal depth, O hooded snake !  
 You sing and dance, O snake!



Sliding into the hole, up you keep the head, O snake !  
 Coil yourself, O snake colourful !  
 Stand bound by Truth you do, O snake !  
 Raise your hood and dance, O snake !

To Shiva the Perfect, you are the pendant !  
 To Vishnu the Proclaimer, you are the parasol !  
 To Parvati with the abundant curls, you are the bracelet !  
 Not sneaking out in stealth, dance in joy, O snake !

Mighty strength to support the world you have !  
 Vishnu's bed beautiful you are  
 The fighting forces by your sight are frightened !  
 You do dance, O snake that has its eyes as ears !

## 2

### Obeisance to the Mentor

The gift of the physical, material and spiritual,  
 Our mentor great has gained !  
 With your heart, word and self as one,  
 Praise, praise him, and dance, O snake !

What right religion is the mentor true reveals,  
 And exhorts those teaching religion false,  
 The righteous path to follow,  
 Adore his feet, and thus do dance, O snake !

The mentor supreme teaches knowledge scriptural,  
 And awareness spiritual, beyond the scriptural,  
 And wisdom infinite, so keenly sought.  
 His feet thus praising, you do dance, O snake !

Reality perceived right,  
 Reveals the mentor true in perspective real !  
 Finding him, the mind deceitful do abstain from,  
 And dance, in love and joy, O snake !

Our mentor memorable,  
 Clear as a mirror shows the source of all !  
 Ever humbly worshipping him without doubt,

Your golden hood raise and dance, O snake !

3

### Prayer

Wisely, wisely, wisely dance, O snake !  
 Finding Shiva's Gracious Feet, wisely dance, O snake !  
 Dance, O snake ! Wisely dance, O snake !  
 That found we have His Gracious Feet !

His Feet Eternal do ever to us belong,  
 And ever They do indeed, and Great Bliss it is !  
 Thinking of These in dire distress,  
 And spreading thy hood, dance, dance, dance again, O snake !

Like the golden light that suffuses everywhere,  
 Like the flowery fragrance that pervades by beauty bound,  
 The Bouteous One does mix with souls that supplicate !  
 Worshipping His Feet, thou dance, O snake !

All life the Lord permeates, like oil in gingili seed !  
 On his Feet Fragrant, do ever so deeply contemplate !  
 Letting true love loftily flourish,  
 Subdued and sagacious, wisely dance, O snake !

The Universe and the Body-Manifest gave our Lord Supreme!  
 Remembering Him ever, worshipping Him with Love,  
 With praises coming from directions all  
 And reaching Him whole-heartedly, rise, rise and dance, O snake !

From *Pampatti Sitthar Patalkal*, 15th century

Tr. by R. Ganapathy

## The Parrot Ambassador to Azhakar

### PALAPPATTATAI CHOKKANATHA PULAVAR

PALAPPATTATAI CHOKKANATHA PULAVAR (Pālapattāṭṭai Cokkanātha Pulavar, 15th century) was a native of Madurai. He was the author of *Padmagirinathar Tenral Vitu Tutu*, *Madurai Yamaga Antati*, *Madurai Kovai* and *Tevaiyula*.

The following piece is from *Alakar Killai Vitu Tutu*, a messenger poem, where the lady beseeches the parrot to expound her love-laden heart to Alagar or Vishnu of Thirumalirun Cholai (Alakar Koil).

## I

Royal parrot that prides in the name  
 Of Vishnu, the dark-hued Lord !  
 You shine as the emerald sea  
 And are known as the mount of the love-god.  
 Is there one in this world who farms  
 Love's crop and yet does not listen to you ?  
 You are the green horse that draws  
 The chariot of breeze sans wheels  
 From where the love-god wages his daily war.  
 Even the seven steeds of the sun  
 Cannot be your equal.  
 You have a global presence: you are  
 The lamp of wisdom, says sage Shuka,  
 Who was born in your family.  
 There may be birds of different hues  
 Flying everywhere; all the hues merge in you.  
 Lest people mistake you for Goddess Parvati,  
 You have made your beak so red !  
 People turn away from those who stammer.  
 Yet everyone seems to love You !  
 The heroic Jeevakan's wife, Gandharvadattai,  
 Is famous because she has your name.  
 It is silly if people teach other birds,  
 To repeat the names of Vishnu and Shiva  
 The realized soul leaves the body to enter  
 Another existence: you do so with your body  
 By entering the cage meant for you.  
 Being named "keeram" you have a dress !  
 Ornamented with anklets and toe rings.  
 You live in rock fissures and flowering graves.  
 You are a lovable, creeper-like maid.  
 The *sayujya* state attained by the worthy  
 Is all joy; you are a metaphor for that.  
 Like fire you purify all you touch;  
 Hence people eat fruits bitten by you,  
 The good learn only sweet words,  
 But you learn all that is expressed,  
 Though hardly anyone understands you !  
 Where is the person who has reached  
 Your eternal innocence without doing yoga ?  
 You overcome hunger with milk and rice,

Like Vishnu who guards the entire globe.  
 If the nobly-born do not worship you  
 You will never face them.  
 You are the pet of rapier-eyed damsels.  
 You fly away on the approach of hunters.  
 Invested with red and green colours  
 You are as great as Garuda.  
 You teach the spiritual leaders  
 The names of southern Ranga  
 For meditative recitation.  
 You kiss young virgins on their lips  
 Shamelessly like amorous men.  
 Did their lips grow russet by your beak ?  
 Or, have yours gone red by the sheen of their lips ?

II

Royal parrot ! As my body is pale  
 It imitates your golden cage.  
 I too have mango, sweet *kovai* fruit,  
 The jackfruit, cream and crystalline milk.  
 I will feed you as you wish.  
 I will ornament you like Urvashi,  
 Enrobe you in silk  
 And seat you as the king of the cage.  
 I would wave lights before you.  
 Fill the place with scented smoke  
 Dry your feathers in tender sunlight.  
 Holding you on my bangled hand with a kiss  
 I shall teach you all the names  
 Of the Lord who wears the Tulasi.  
 This will help you overcome birth.  
 Can the weakling white swan  
 Boldly convey my message ? No !  
 Nor can the ungrateful cuckoo  
 Which deserts its natal nest with alacrity.  
 The bee if sent as an ambassador  
 Will mispronounce Hari's name.  
 As for using the breeze, it comes from south,  
 The direction of death that tortures me.  
 It is impossible to depute the cloud  
 As a messenger since he misbehaves with ladies.  
 Sending a crow to speak to the Lord,

Who guards the seven worlds, is not right.  
 If you happen to go on my behalf  
 And meet the devotees, praise them first.  
 Then if you see Lakshmi, hop on to her hand.  
 If he asks from where you have flown,  
 Say: "My lord of Tirumaliruncholai,  
 I have come to worship you."  
 You are capable of speaking to Him in Telugu  
 Of my love without making angry  
 The goddesses Saundaravalli and Goda Devi;  
 May you end my sorrow and bring  
 The lovely Tulasi garland worn by my Lord

*Alakar Killai Vitu Tutu*, 15th century

Tr. by Prema Nandakumar

## Chiding the Moon

ATTIVIRARAMA PANTTYAN

ATTIVIRARAMA PANTTYAN (Athivīrarāma Pāndiyan, 1562-1610) was a ruler of Tenkasi in Tirunelveli; he was also a gifted talent of poetry. He wrote *Naitatham* (Naiṣadham), *Kashikandam*, *Ilinga Puranam*, and *Kurma Puranam*. *Naitatham* is an epic which tells the story of Nala and Damayanti found in Sanskrit *Naishadha Charita* of Shri-Harsha, rendered into Tamil in 29 *patalams* with 1176 stanzas in *viruttam* metre. For its tantalizing effect, *naitatham* is described as the "Poet's Elixir" (*Naitatham*, *Pulavarku Outatham*).

This poem represents love-lorn Damayanti chiding the moon:

1

O silver moon, rising on the horizon,  
 Where the seas' crystal waters meet the sky;  
 I know not from where you learnt  
 To drink up the lives of the love-lorn;  
 Is it from the "Vadavai" flame  
 That dries up the ocean's approaching waves  
 Or from the dread poison  
 That bleaches even the collyrium white?

2

O cruel moon, whose advent  
 Makes the red lotus petals close;

Kill me with you cruel, sword-like rays  
And earn fame eternal !  
Blessed be the lineage of the sea-king  
Whose flawless penance gave you birth !  
Pray desist for ever from torturing me,  
Already in the throes of love !

3

O great moon, whose sun-like rays  
Brighten up the blackest darkness  
And torture the damsels,  
Separated from their beloved mates;  
But when the rising sun at dawn  
Reddens the billowing sea into molten gold,  
I have seen you  
Turning pale.

4

O pearly moon; when the lord,  
Who wielded the calf as a stick  
To feel fruits from the tree,  
Threw the mountain into the sea,  
No damage did you suffer;  
Had you been digested  
When the pot-born sage drank up the wave-tossed sea,  
You would not burn me now.

5

O burning moon, a lovely dame I am,  
Wounded by arrows of blooming flowers;  
Stop piercing my wounds with burning rays;  
Caress instead my body with your hands of rays,  
Which have touched earlier  
My beloved's broad shoulders  
That challenge the golden mountain  
Which dwarfs the guardian mountains eight.

6

O cruel, white-moon !  
You dry up the sea of utter darkness  
And kill me, wretched me,

Pouring fire on my breasts;  
 Your burning rays make even the moon-stone melt;  
 Is it any wonder then  
 That the lives of earthly creatures  
 Melt into nothingness at your touch ?

## 7

The serpent with the lowered hood  
 Swallows you and then spits you out, O moon!  
 You were born with nectar, and poison too  
 That frightens even the celestial hordes;  
 Is that why you comfort with cooling touch  
 The girls united with their lovers,  
 And burn like fire the wretched folk.  
 Separated from their loved ones ?

## 8

You were born, O moon, with the "vadavai" fire;  
 Growing to your first phase  
 You made your home near the fiery eye  
 Of the Lord with the shaggy, matted hair;  
 Then, growing to fulness, you stayed a while;  
 In the venomous mouth of the pursuing snake;  
 Is it any wonder then  
 That out of you comes deadly fire ?

## 9

O moon, deadly to love-lorn ladies  
 Who, bereft of sleep are mad with grief,  
 Whose sandal-adorned breasts  
 Have taken on a sallow hue;  
 Un-blemish on your body is fiery poison indeed!  
 That is the reason why  
 The venomous snake that seeks to swallow  
 Cannot hold you and so spit you out.

## 10

O moon, silver-white;  
 You disgorge fire and burn me out!

You know not the coolness of the milky sea  
Where you were born along with nectar sweet;  
You remember not the coolness of the flowing matted hair  
Of the supreme Lord, whom the scriptures praise,  
Who is beyond reach even for God  
That was his abode on the lotus flower.

*Naitatham*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by S. Krishnamurthy

## Selections

### KUMARAKURUPARAR

SAINT KUMARAKURUPARAR (Kumāraguruparar, 1628-1688) was born at Srivaikundam in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. He was the founder of the Kumarasami Mutt at Varanasi. He lived there between the years 1658 and 1688.

The early life of the saint is shrouded in mysterious happenings. He was dumb for five years from his birth and, getting the power of the tongue in his fifth year by the grace of Lord Muruka at Tiruchentur, sang a poetic piece entitled *Kandar Kali Venpa* (Kandar Kali Venpa). He then left his native land and reached Madurai where he sang *Meenakshi Ammai Pillai Tamil*, and while the young poet was explaining the verses therein in the presence of Tirumalai Nayak, the then ruler of Madurai, Goddess Meenakshi appeared in the form of a girl, garlanded him with a pearl necklace and disappeared to the wonder of all. He then composed *Niti Neri Vilakkam* at the request of Tirumalai Nayak for inculcating wisdom (moral code) in the rich and the poor. Proceeding to Tiruvarur he sang *Nanmanimalai*. He then reached Dharmapuram where he was initiated by Shilashri Mashilamani Deshiga Gnanasambandhar Svamikal in the saintly order of the Dharmapuram Adhinam, about whom he sang a garland of songs called *Pandara Mummanikkovai*. He afterwards went on pilgrimage to Chidambaram. On his way he sang *Muthukumarasvami Pillai Tamil* at Vaithisvarankoil. It seems he stayed at Chidambaram for a pretty long time and there he sang *Chidambara Mummanikkovai*, *Chidambara Cheyyut Kovai*, etc. Then he proceeded to Varanasi where he sang ten songs on Goddess Sarasvathi called *Sakala Kalavalli Malai* (Sakala Kalā Valli Mālai) and mastered the Hindustani language. It was during his stay at Varanasi that he interviewed the Nawab there. It is also said that he went riding on a lion to meet the Nawab who, having been deeply and devoutly impressed by the greatness of the saint, very liberally helped him in all his activities such as the erection of Kedar Mandir on the west bank of the Ganga and the founding of a charitable institution called Kumarasvami Mutt. He passed away at the ripe age of sixty in 1688.



Three of his poems are given below.

1

Poem on Skanda in Kalivenpa Metre

You are, verily, the knowledge that is beyond the comprehension of the celestial Creator that dwells on the red lotus (symbolic of unfolding knowledge), beyond the ken of the Vedas, ancient and divine (revealed by the Creator), beyond even the luminous principle of Nada (the source of intelligibility itself) and, indeed, over-reaching even a knowledge that is pure (undefiled by association with Pasa). (1-2)

Without a beginning, middle or end, You are Knowledge Supreme, eternal and blissful, and the Light Supernal that dispels (the darkness of) bondage. You are Paramashiva, which is nameless, attributeless, formless, and omnipresent being itself. (3-4)

You are without a beginning for knowledge (i. e. eternal and, therefore, transcendent to knowledge) and transcend even Your own five-fold cosmic functions. Your forms are inscrutable to understanding, forms, five again, assumed freely by you involving no deviation from Your Blissful essence. You are the unmatched Being, being the sole refuge of all individual souls. You are infinite perfection itself, lacking in nothing, eternal and knew no going or coming or uniting. You are without a beginning for yourself but you are the ultimate end (of all things). (5-7)

You are like a magician in the world who, as it were, involves himself in his magical deception that casts a spell on his spectators. You are the womb of all existence, and yourself come of no womb. You are the arch Form that makes it possible for any form to be, but you are yourself devoid of form. (8-9)

With your triple "senses" of Will, Knowledge and Action, you become, accordingly, one that subjects to the three states of preparatory absorption (*laya*), joyful predisposition for performing cosmic functions (*bhoga*) and the consummation of the office of cosmic activity (*adhikara*). Without ceasing to be one, you assume (for performing cosmic functions) varied forms, the formless, the formful and the form that partakes of both, and in addition, you take on innumerable forms appropriate to the degree of ripeness (of individual souls). (10-11)

The many souls that are (beginninglessly) steeped in the delusion of Impure Darkness, You are set (beginninglessly again) to redeem. Accordingly

you confer your gracious look on them so that their Bond first becomes ripe (fit for removal). You fasten the principles of Bindu, Mohini and Mān, of natures form and formless, to the souls (steeped in Darkness) thus binding them (again) so that the souls may emerge from the state of Bodyless pre-existence and get embodied (and launched on their empirical existence). You cause their becoming united with six-fold *adhvan*<sup>1</sup> of mantra, etc. micro-cosmic and macro-cosmic, in their function, which may be considered the initial (physical) bond. (12-14)

Into the four categories of embodied life and the seven kinds of birth, and a eighty-four hundred thousand species therein, you cause the souls to be born and reborn in endless cycles, like kite and cart-wheel, in due accord with their inexorable karma (the moral bond). Such is your function of "veil" by which you vouchsafe to souls experiences of pain and pleasure and of hell and heaven. In the efflux of time when due to their maturity of spirit the good hour approaches a little, you make it possible for them to become aware of and be grasped by rival faiths of yore, and establish firmly in their convictions in their authority. You cause them eventually to perform and practise the religious acts of Worship (*Caya*), Ritual (*Kriya*), and Meditation (*Yoga*) which are the true termini of true austerities and observances enjoined in great scriptures. Practising them they are also enabled to find and enjoy the transcendent fruits of such practices, viz. Divine Kingdom (*Saloka*), Divine form (*Sarupa*) and Divine proximity (*Samipya*) (all implying accomplishment of spiritual freedom in a rudimentary sense), and thus have the horizon of their consciousness extended (being freed of the obstruction of darkness).

(15-20)

When thus is attained the hour of ripeness for Bondage, ripe for removal, again in turn, a consequence of attaining a state of transmoral equanimity in the face of the moral distinction of merit and demerit, the stage is set for the Descent of Grace, four-fold in kind (commensurate with four degrees of ripeness). Divine Grace, sensitive to the human lot of unending suffering descends as it were, from its state of being the hidden Knowledge of man's "I know" identical with it while also infinitely transcending it, and assumes a form fashioned out of its own compassion, and appears before the world in the name and guise of the Holy Teacher (present as the Thou encountering the "I"). (21-22)

By your sheer look is annulled his accumulated Karma and his entire psycho-biological structure with its sixty-eight instruments, seven centres (the six-fold group of physico-mental centres within the *sushumna* and the

over-mental *dvadasanta* beyond the *sushumna*), and the six *adhvans* homologous with the six macro-cosmic variety) is "emptied" (of content so that he may be de-conditioned). In this way you pierce the vision-obstructing film of Anava<sup>1</sup> (literally the ego-centricity that "atomizes" the ubiquitous self) and bestow and reveal his eye of True Wisdom unknown to knowledge. By means of such Wisdom (symbolized as knowing the Holy Feet) you reveal the ultimate and the self; You reveal indeed all the worlds under the sweep of Your providence. You reveal Your inalienable presence pervasive of everywhere as the sweet nectar of limitless joy (though untasted by the disorder-ridden soul). You cause the attainment of the true happiness of being freed from the tension (of the polarities of) night and day, memory and oblivion, birth and death. (23-24)

(To another class belongs souls that are steeped in the spiritual impurity of Darkness differently, such that they are from the very beginning unbound by the bond of Maya). These souls, sullied by the impurities of the Anava and Karma, you redeem by directly appearing in your celestial form, three-eyed, matted-haired and holding aloft a battle-axe and deer, and riding the huge Bull (symbolic of Dharma) with Devi (symbolizing the active principle of manifested existence) on the left, looking like a coral hill transposed on a silver mountain. Appearing thus, you sever the ripened bonds of Maya and Karma. (30-32)

To the class of souls steeped in one Impurity only you confer the joy of beatitude from within, making them transcend the three states of existence, (pre-corporeal, corporeal and post-corporeal) and placing them in the company of the liberated and helping attain Final Liberation. (33)

You are the Matchless Light that stands immanently in and as the world, where hath ceased the "I" and "Mine" that indeed is your Feet. Your Crown is but where is experienced the Joy of speechless silence. Wisdom (untainted by Ignorance) is verily your Form. Feeling action and knowledge are your eyes. Gracious love is as such your lotus-like hand. The world at large itself is your sanctum. You are the Lord standing non-different from every living creature. (34-36)

(Out of superabundant Grace again you assume a personal form of many heads and arms so that your devotees may contemplate your vivid presence). Thus they see in their mind's eye your dazzling diadems bedecked with lustrous stones (symbolic of sovereignty). They see the beautiful marks on your foreheads smeared with sacred ash appearing like six crescent moons

1. Inherent cosmic evil, not natural to the soul.

set in a row. The six pairs of eyes be-speaking benevolence on your countenance remind one of twelve lotus flowers in full bloom. The fish-styled ear-rings on your ears scintillate like many suns rising simultaneously. Your russet lips bloom into smiles of glow like crimson lilies. Your sweet words quench the thirst or craving for life.

Your six faces are concrete expressions and embodiments of your Gracious concern. One of them annihilates the hostile having slain the demoniacal Surapadma notorious among the cruel Asuras armed with arrows. Another face roseate and radiant, countermands the Law of necessity and confers an abundant life of Supreme felicity. A third face makes possible discerning the import of the revelation of Vedas of yore and the Agamas contemplated by men of thoughtful concern. Another countenance cherubic and sweet like a scented flower radiates like the multi-rayed sun, the aura (of knowledge) that dispels the darkness of Bondage. The fifth one, cool as the moon to the romantically disposed, bespeaks love to your beloved consorts Valli and Devayani united to you in love. The lotus of yet another face showers boons on those that fall yearningly at your feet, and fills them with joy. (37-47)

The twelve hillocks of your arms on which have blossomed the fresh blooms of the fragrant Kadamba and Kuravu (favourite to you) too, are contemplated by your devotees. One arm gives away the nectar (of immortality) to the celestials. A second one holds the celestial nymphs in sweet embrace. Another flowery arm rains ceaseless favours. A fourth one wears floral wreaths in close array. One again is held on the chest, one on the left waist and a third on the thigh (mudras of unfailing protection to the devout). One arm is adorned with the bracelet of valour (symbolic of omnipotence). Another wears sacred beads, and yet another holds the goad with which to direct the cavalry charge of elephants in the bloody battle. One arm brandishes the shield that reverberates in the battle-field and one flourishes the shining sword. (48-53)

Your broad chest bedecked with gold and gems is embraced in love by your consorts of big breasts, slender waists and russet lips. The golden sacred thread across your chest and the garland of beads, your silken apparel and the girdle girding your waist, adorn you. Various kinds of ornaments adorn your ankle, the resounding Kazhal (symbolic of the word in the beginning) the gingling Kinkini and the tinkling Paripura that encircle your feet. Your divine form dazzles like a hundred million stars.

(54-57)

My Lord ! you become the very self of those that cherish you contemplating you thus in the aforementioned ways, in their mind's eye. You are the

Light that burns on the lotus of devoted hearts. You are the interior illumination, i.e. Om. You partake as the identical form of the different deities presiding over the five-fold cosmic functions. (58-59)

Your 'corporeal' Form is none other than the six *adhvas* (comprising the totality of all that there is and all speech). Thus the *adhvan* of mantra, so rare to breed, is, as it were, the blood flowing in your veins. That of *pada* is the dicdem on your head. The *varna* that envelopes the bond is your skin. The *adhvan* of *bhuvanas* (infinite in number) is the hair on your body. That of *tattva* is the seven-fold constituent of your physique. *Kala* is your limb. (60-62)

The multi-million universes are your form. The animate and inanimate beings therein are, verily, your sensory-motor organs. The three-fold powers of volition, knowledge and actions are your internal senses. Thus, my lord, do you cause and by your sole power make possible the performance of the five-fold cosmic functions with the view to inculcate knowledge in to the ignorant souls.

You are the very life of Being that is comprehensively revealed in the eight forms (namely, the five material elements, sun and the moon that condition vital existence) and the soul that typifies mental and spiritual existence. You are the fruit of the penance of eight-fold yoga that issues in true knowledge. (63-65)

Your ten insignia of regality are also hailed and hallowed by the learned. Thus your Hill is but the blessedness which dwells in the heart of those filled with unconditional devotion that never fails to accompany the advent of ripeness. The River is the flood of supreme felicity and joy of spirit. The Land is what vouchsafes the happiness of realizing elevation or transcendence (of spirit). The Capital is the place whence there is no going or return, and is the abode of happiness that transcends all the happiness of the world. The Steed is what fills everywhere (by its swiftness) knowing no commencement or end, and is run by the recital of *Panchakshara*. The Elephant is the Shivagnana that, effusing its rut, shuns away by its tusk the five-fold mala. The regal Garland is the one that is strung on the thread of devotion at heart with the help of fresh flowers of knowledge, knowledge that is infinite by virtue of relation with the infinitude of Shiva. The Banner is what is held aloft through incessant, prevenient bestowal of the grace of five-fold cosmic activity. The regal Drum is the principle of nada itself (that resounds as the condition of all intelligibility). The sovereign Law is what brings the cosmos to existence and sustains it eternally and inalienably, like one in absolute control of his reflection in a mirror. (66-74)

Thus is praised one by one your ten-fold insignia (each connotive of your sovereignty, absolute knowledge and unconditional love) by the learned initiated in the ecstatic lore of wisdom.

Once upon a time, the three-eyed Lord, Shiva, at the residence of the resplendent and holy Mount Kailash, with his consort the flower bedecked damsel dwelling at His left, in answer to the supplication of the celestial beings who were squirming under the forces of evil asuras, manifested His six faces, the downward looking one and the five encompassing all directions. The third fiery eye in each fore head converged and emitted six sparks of fire. The sparks flew all over the wide world and the celestial beings were struck with terror. Thereupon the Lord gathered together the fiery flames emitted by him, in his golden hands, and ordered it to be carried by the lord of the winds. The latter gently carried what is thus entrusted to him, and, in turn, gave it to the next God of the element (fire) bidding him to carry it. The God of fire, in turn, again rushed it to the cool waters of the Ganges. But even the Ganges being unable to endure the task for long, swiftly carried it on her crest and reached it to a sacred tank overgrown with holy weeds (Saravana). There the Divine Sparks turned into forms of babies. Suckled by the six nymphs of the constellation of Kartika, the babies were playing and frolicking, when the Lord, wearing the sweet Ganges on his crown, goes thither with his smiling Maid of a consort; and shows her his beautiful creation. She lovingly clasps together the six forms in her two arms joining the six bodies into one. You are that child thus held together and therefore named Skanda. Kissing you endearingly she suckled you with over-flowing joy, and placed you in the hands of her Lord, the one who rides the white Bull which is none other than Vishnu that spanned the expanding universe with one foot-step. (75-86)

Once, from the jewels of the anklet worn by the Lady came nine celestial nymphs. Their griefs overcome, they rejoicingly gave birth to nine warriors, the eldest of whom was Veeravahu by name. Veeravahu vanquished the spirit of a fierce red-eyed ram that came out of the fire of sacrifice (performed with malevolent intention). The ram was spelling ruin and destruction to all the wide worlds. Veeravahu seizing it brought it to you, praying "My King, ride it." O Lord! you mounted on it and rode the eight corners of the Universe in triumphant sport. (87-90)

Once, the Creator Brahma, became conceited (as being the originator of the Vedas). Interrogating him as to the truth of Pranava acclaimed as the originating mystic source of all the Vedas, you knocked him on his head saying "You could not answer. How do you perform the function of cosmic creation?" and clapped the God of creation in prison.

But when the great Lord Shiva with matted locks and golden laburnum, bade you, his son, prayerfully to answer the question, You gave out its truth as the plenary Brahman itself. (90-93)

The demon Taraka of fierce and deadly hands, and his invincible citadel of the Krauncha hill, you smited to smithereens by hurling your heroic spear.

Thereafter, you retired to Tiruchendur on the shore washed by the tides of the sea and remained there seated on the throne granting gracious audience to the devotees. Giving refuge to Indra, the Lord of the celebrated white elephant, you sent as your emissary the triumphant tough shouldered Veeravahu on a peace mission of negotiating with Surapadma installed securely at Mahendrapuri, on behalf of the celestial beings. But as the dark Asura would not agree to release the celestial beings held in ransom and surrender, you enraged, destroyed the divisions of the enemy, and vanquished Banukopa and other sons of Surapadma along with the Singamukhasura and won laurels.

In the vast ocean encircling the world, Surapadma fled and hid himself assuming the form of a new and stately mango tree. But you rent his body asunder with your luminous spear. (95-101)

The fighting Asura still would not give in. Cut into two, he reappeared unabated in the form of two fierce and valiant birds, the fighting peacock and the cock. Of these, my youthful lord, the picturesque peacock that stays the hissing serpent you made your portly vehicle and rode. The hostile fighting cock you hoisted as the matchless mark on your triumphant banner. (101-103)

In redress of the grievances of the three gods, of the three cosmic offices) you released the imprisoned celestials and rehabilitated them in their heavenly homes. (104)

You are the very shoot of the Shaiva tree forming the end of the Veda. You are an ocean of penance but you married Devayanai, the celestial daughter of the sky. More, you took in marriage as your consort Valli born of a beautiful deer fecundated by the sheer look of a sage who had conquered all evil desires. Brought up with fervent devotion by the hill-tribes, Valli was looking after the millet fields like a young cuckoo. You went to her ingratiatingly, accepted her offer of choice honey and millet flour, and married her. (105-108)

The hearts of those devout worshippers who make a pilgrimage to your six holy shrines and recite in love your six-lettered name, you make your dwelling. (109)

O Lord of the red hue, you are the protector of the city of Tiruchendur  
lashed by the tides of the sea and skirted by arecanut groves consisting of  
trees brushing the clouds above. (110)

The dreadful myriads of births, the myriads of woes incident thereto caus-  
ing endless sorrow and ailments, the myriads of commissions of evils, of the  
danger of snakes, of ghosts and of demons, of threats from fire, water and of  
hostile forces lined up against me, from venomous poison and from wild  
beasts, wherever they confront me threatening my very being, protect me,  
Oh Lord.

Protect me by granting the vision of you riding the green peacock, your  
twelve mighty arms, the shapely spear that stems all fear, your winsome  
waist surrounded by belt, your handsome feet, russet hands, your six pairs of  
gracious eyes and great countenances, your six crowns that scintillate radiance.  
These must appear before me wherever I am in need, without fail. (111-116)

Let your vision pound away mishaps and grant all favours and be en-  
shrined in my heart to my great joy. The many skills like being able to  
compose poems in all the different styles, the skill of attending to many  
things at one and the same time, becoming well-versed in the classics of  
yore, in poetics and other branches of grammar, grant to me. Inspire me  
and grant me solid ripe scholarship of Tamil. Make it possible in this very  
birth, through right living, to conquer the attachments of "I" and "Mine"  
and become rid of the three great bonds of evil. Releasing from their  
shackles, make me part of the community of devotees who meditate on  
you, and thus enjoy, here and now, the bliss of supreme beatitude. Ac-  
cept me as your servant, unworthy and distant though I be, by granting  
the vision of your lotus feet and the gift of your palpable presence to me  
your bond-servant. (117-123)

*Kandar Kali Venpa*, 17th century

Tr. by K. Sivaraman

## 2

### A Garland for the Goddess of All Arts

#### i

O Goddess of All Arts  
Besides the white lotus,  
Is not the cool lotus of my white (pure) heart



Also fit to carry your feet ?

While Vishnu who swallowed the seven worlds is slumbering,  
And Shiva who dissolved life is dancing in frenzy,  
You are as sweet as sugarcane to Brahma  
Out of whose vision came creation.

*ii*

Bless and command me with the task of singing  
Four kinds of poetry drenched in the flavour of meaning  
And the taste of words whenever sought;  
The creeper which is made of fine yellowish gold,  
And sits in the seat of lotus,  
The sugarcane which carries the hills of breasts  
And the forest of flowing hair,  
O Goddess of All Arts !

*iii*

When will it befall me  
That, having drunk deep the nectar of rich Tamil gifted by you,  
I also bathe in the ocean of your Grace?  
You, the peacock which dances with spread feathers  
Delighted over the shower of poetry  
Poured profusely by poets who compose poems  
With a mind as clear as crystal,  
O Goddess of All Arts !

*iv*

O Goddess of All Arts  
The Ocean of Mercy  
Which dwells in the tongue of the devotees,  
And protects the ocean of Sanskrit as well as  
The wealth of rich Tamil;  
Grant me your grace and command  
That the knowledge  
Soaked in the art of the analysis of poetic compositions  
And the art of utterance with the taste of words increase !

*v*

O Goddess of All Arts,  
You were seated on the throne of the long-stemmed white lotus,

And in the fine tongue and the mind of  
The Brahma who unfurled the banner of Annam,  
Why have not your golden-red, soft feet  
Coated with cotton and giving comfort  
Bloomed in the pond of my heart ?

*vi*

O Goddess of All Arts,  
Grant me the boon !  
Let music, dance and learning  
And the poetic composition of delicious words  
Come to me with ease when I think of them;  
You who pervade the sky, the earth, water and fire  
As well as the eye and the mind of your devotees:

*vii*

Grant me with the glance of your eye that  
The gift of the Song, its meaning, and  
The fruit that comes in consonance with meaning  
Come to me profusely  
The white radiant swan that separates  
Water from the sweet milk of the art of Tamil poetry  
Springing up from the soul of the devotees,  
O Goddess of All Arts !

*viii*

O Goddess of All Arts,  
Grant me the power of oratory as well as the ability to attend to  
Multiple things simultaneously  
And the goodly art of teaching poetry  
And make me your slave in return;  
The great source of learning, which gives a perfection that never fades,  
Which is rare to the goddess of wealth seated in the red lotus,  
O Goddess of All Arts !

*ix*

O Goddess of All Arts,  
The mother whose feet dwells in the lotus  
And learns the art of walking so graciously as to shame  
The she-elephant, with its trunk touching the earth,

And the kingly swan;  
 You, who stand as the embodiment of the Wisdom,  
 Which is the life of the word and the meaning,  
 Who can conceive you in thought ?

*x*

O Goddess of All Arts,  
 Make the monarchs of the entire earth under the white umbrella  
 Make obeisance to me the moment they hear my poetry  
 Eventhough millions of gods can be found in Heaven  
 Beginning with Brahma, the creator,  
 Is there any visible god, like you, to speak the truth ?

*Sakalakalavallimalai*, 17th century

*Tr.* by K. Chellappan

*3*

### An Elucidation of Ethics

*i*

Though Saraswati dwells in Brahma's face,  
 he cannot equal the illustrious Tamil poets;  
 for the famous works these create perish not,  
 like those of Brahma, bereft of fame.

*ii*

To attempt to learn more, without safe-  
 guarding by continuous study what has  
 already been arduously acquired, is like  
 throwing away abundant wealth in hand  
 and then striving hard later, collecting it by  
 sifting.

*iii*

No one knows everything; exult not there-  
 fore in the vain thought that you have  
 learnt everything; O you, adorned with ear  
 ornaments ! the rock that yields not to the  
 blacksmith's hammer yields to the stone-  
 mason's chisel.

*iv*

Beholding those poorer than yourself, rejoice  
that your lot is happier; but beholding  
those that are better off, reproach your-  
self that all you have learnt is nothing  
by comparison with theirs.

*v*

He who seeks the esteem of others should  
unforgettingly adhere to a vow of extolling  
the virtues of others, of concealing their  
defects and of addressing all with humility.

*vi*

Those that are resolved on doing a thing  
mind not their bodily exertion; feel no  
hunger, indulge not in sleep; care not for  
the hindrance of others, regard not the  
unsuitability of time and mind not the  
scoffs of others.

*vii*

O you, who practise deceit, rejoice not  
that you have deceived everyone It is  
wisdom to quake and shudder at the thought  
that there is one unseen, who is omnipresent  
and sees you in secret.

*Niti Neri Vilakkam*, 17th century

Tr. by T. B. Krishnaswamy

## Selections

### PILLAIPERUMAL IYENKAR

AZHAKIYAMANAVALADASAR (Aṭṭakiamanaṇavaladāsar, 17th century) is the author of *Ashtaprabandham*, which refers to the eight texts, namely *Tiruvarangattu Antati*, *Tiruvarangattu Malai*, *Tiruvaranga Kalampagam*, *Sriranganayakar Uosal*, *Tiruvenkada Malai*, *Tiruvenkadattu Antati*, *Alagar Antati* and *Nurrtuttu Tiruppati Antati*. He is also called Pillaiperumal Iyenkar. He was a great scholar well-versed in both Sanskrit and Tamil.

*Tiruvaranka Kalampakam* (Tiruvaranka Kaḷampakam) has 101 hymns that

sing the glory of Lord Renkanatha, the presiding deity of Srirankam.

*Tiruvenkatattu Antati* (Tiruvenkarattu Antāti) consists of 100 hymns, which sing the glory of Lord Venkateswara. Tiruvenkatam is popularly known as Tirupati. Venkatam is one of the 108 Divya Desams (holy cities) of the Lord.

The following selections are from the above two poems: (1) from *Tiruvaranka Kalampakam* and (2) from *Tiruvenakatattu Antati*.

1

Tiruvaranka Kalampakam

He, the loving Father, who nurtures  
He, the Master, the Preceptor  
Who dispels ignorance, and  
Bestows blessings;  
He, the melting Mercy, my Hold,  
He, the Metaphysics and Moksha,  
He, the twin-bodied, fiery-eyed Ayan,  
Is the graceful Mukundan, the infallible  
Lord of Shrivaikuntam, the Lord of Tiruvarankam:  
Unto His lotus feet, let me surrender. (14)

The humming bee, the messenger to Tiruvarankar,  
Will he forget me, inebriate with honey in groves?  
Will he wing beyond the groves, reach the temple?  
Will he receive the benedictions wonderful,  
Or delay to receive them? I don't know, my heart! (25)

To cease the birth-death swing, manifold births,  
Play your swing in me, O King of Tiruvarankam!  
Make a plank out of my black mind, your Mercy, the ropes,  
Swing, Swing! Swaying the scented garland  
And lilting your sparkling ear-drops!  
Swirl with your spouses, Shri and Bhu! (58)

O, my Lord of Tiruvarankam, desirous to sleep,  
Endless are the births, before;  
Bless me not with more births,  
Give my soul, a little space, at your feet divine. (71)

My He-Man! Lord Kanna! King of Tiruvarankam!  
Enough of this flesh, the birth,  
Enough of your indifference to me,  
Save me, I surrender at your golden feet! (99)

From *Tiruvaranka Kalampakam*

**Tiruvencatattu Anthati**

I, the sinful, the liar lascivious,  
The merciless stone-hearted, the ferocious,  
The avaricious in pernicious pit,  
You, from the Mount, should give yours  
Anklet-adorned feet ! that's your Mercy holy. (98)

Holy mantras, the conch and discus, the forehead mark—not there,  
Not there are dharma and surrender,  
He, who cleaved golden-hued Hiranya, dwells  
In Tiruvencatam; you, not gone even near  
How'll you ward off your black births ? (99)

Black birth's panacea, He, the life-saver,  
Who throws bliss-tides, my Parent perennial,  
Who dwells in Mallai, Milk-Ocean,  
Vaikuntam and Tirumalai, hath given  
Me, His feet sacred. (100)

His feet sacred set in Tiruvencatam, the feet  
That walked the hot desert, 'cause of Ma's command,  
That stay no any mean soul, to protectus  
That sped to save Gajendra: "Fear not !"  
Says He to him, the Lord of Tiruvencatam. (101)

Tiruvencatam, the mountain-resort of Lord,  
Who churned the milk-ocean with hilly hands,  
Morn and eve worshipped long-plaited Shiva  
Wearing crescent moon, 'nd Brahma, Indra  
Learned saints and angels meditate Him within. (102)

From *Tiruvencatattu Anthati*, 17th century

Tr. by Padma Srinivasan

**The Essence of Bliss with Lord Shiva**

**KURU JNANASAMBANTHAR**

KURU JNANASAMBANTHAR (Guru Jñānasambandhar, 17th century) was the founder of the Shaiva Mutt at Dharmapuram. He hailed from a Karkatha Vellala community at Srivilliputtur. His parents named him Jnanasambandhar, as they had great de-

votion to the boy-saint Thirujnanasambandhar. Once they took him to Madurai to worship at the Meenakshi temple. On their return, Jnanasambandhar declined to go with them saying that he wanted to be with his spiritual parents in the temple.

Jnanasambandhar obtained a linga by god's grace when he took a bath in the temple tank. Directed by Him, he proceeded to Tiruvarur where he met his preceptor Kamalai Jnanappirakasar. Initiated by Jnanappirakasar he attained spiritual knowledge. He stayed with him for some time and according to the instruction of his guru he proceeded to Dharmapuram and established there the Shiva Mutt.

*Chokkanata Kalitturai, Jnanapirakasa Malai, Navaratna Malai, Dasa Karya Ahaval, Mukti Nichayam, Shivabhoga Saram, (Śivabhōgasāram)* are some of his works.

The following excerpts are from *Shivabhogasaram*:

1

The State of Realization

How didst Thou enter me, Sire, that sportiest in bounties  
So that the flood of joy doth overflow the banks and rise  
Consuming my heart, consuming my body  
And that the roguish impurity hath become a falsehood. (44)

Whatever I do, whatever I say,  
Whatever I remain thinking, Mahadev !  
If I but realize, by Thy Grace, all that action to be Thine.  
I do not perceive mine. (45)

Where hath the maya-mala hidden,  
Where hath the maya-made world perished,  
Where is the purusha that resideth in the body ?  
Lo ! the flood of truth, intelligence and joy  
Hath in profusion entered everywhere. (46)

I have become the form of joy, by Thy grace  
Akash also hath stood as form of joy  
But even akash is not the form of joy,  
Like the earth that hath lost its smell,  
The Akash is merely an inner form of Thine. (47)

Abiding though I was, under the feet of the Lord,  
Weary I had grown, seeking His very feet everywhere,

Before I saw His holy feet, His pretty, ineffable feet,  
His golden feet like lotus red. (48) '

Janaprakash in Arur of sacred standing,  
My father, the Highest, gave me a sword of wisdom  
Who dare do anything to me who feareth not  
Dark Death, Brahma or Vishnu even in my dreams ? (49)

In the perfect void, in the utter expanse of great joy,  
In the hovel the mischievous thieves can't find,  
He placed me having driven the pasam,  
Jnanaprakash that moveth all universe. (50)

He showed it in my heart assuredly  
The manner of my existence as intelligence  
Ever united with Shivam without severance  
He of Arur, that danceth in the Hall, Jnanaprakash. (51)

The Lord, the chief of Kamalai of the South  
That granteth wisdom to all living things  
He with golden feet like lotus red,  
Hath, this day, united me with truth  
And placed me securely  
With all difference gone,  
With the thought, that we are one or two, also gone. (52)

The Lord whom the stone-hearted Vishnu and Brahma have not seen,  
Of whom even the hard-hearted cannot say,  
"Lo, He is wanting in this"— He hath come before thee  
To tell thee of all the good things thou hast desired.  
My good heart, what else dost thou want ? (53)

Where are the friends, where the things pleasure and pain,  
Where are the wicked, the actions, where are they ?  
Where is the communion with the good,  
The day thou hast desired Shiva's joy that diminisheth not  
The day thou hast stood as that ? (54)

All the things that come with speech or mind or body  
They shall cease to be with speech or mind or body.  
Lose thy speech and mind and body. Perceive the state  
Wherein perceiver, perception and the perceived are lost. (55)

We enjoy Shivabhoga, we live in perfection everywhere  
We are not of the world. We live without end.



We bow down to the golden feet  
Of the great tapasvins who have realised Shivam.  
Who then are our equals ? (56)

## 2

## The Means to Realization

Thou knowest full well thou art intelligence.  
Still if thou join with Maya saying that thou art  
Filled with it, would wisdom be found,  
Would blissful joy come to thee,  
Would the disease of birth leave thee ? (57)

Just as I hid Myself in thine intelligence  
And stood as thou,  
If thou canst hide thyself in Mine intelligence  
And stand as I, always,  
Lo, there is nothing more to learn  
To end thy round of births. (67)

Thou canst dwell in blissful joy;  
Never shall painful karma pursue thee, — only  
Perish not in identity with the body, the seat of hardy confusion,  
Calmly abide, my heart, embodied in grace. (68)

Forgetting the body, standing as holy grace,  
Commune Oh ! my heart, to cultivate Shivabhoga,  
That thou may be without suffering pain,  
Without withering in wicked deeds,  
Without eating the fruits of pain, without taking birth again. (69)

Are not the elements and the like bonds ?  
Is not perfect joy the end !  
Does not the Lord dwell in us without distinction ?  
Is not it joy if experience is left behind ?—  
If even such hankering queries do not rise in our thoughts,  
Then there shall be an end of birth. (70)

Sink not in bonds alas, daily;  
If thou fallest, thou wilt have to rise.  
The great mount of heavenly bliss,  
Sweeter by far than rich syrup ? (71)

Listen, o mind, that perissheth sinking  
In the troublous sea of birth for ever;  
If thou wouldst join the Supreme One  
Without sojourning desolate in the body,  
Mix thou not in worldly gatherings. (72)

3

Severance of Action

When it is the Lord that doeth all the deeds  
Through each as each deserves,  
Why judgest thou, my heart, the men as good or bad ?  
Consider all the deeds to be Shiva's own. (73)

Whither it will lead me, whither it will lay me down,  
Whither it will place me, I do not know  
The Grace of Him, my Sovereign  
Who weareth the Ganga and the Moon  
Who danceth in Tillai with rhythmic jingle. (74)

Wherever worlds and enjoyment be  
There will the body and karanas roam;  
It being so, take them not to be thyself and suffer  
O heart, perceive thyself and stand in grace. (75)

Whatever thou doest, whatever thou speakest  
Whatever thou thinkest about,  
Never wander from the eye of grace  
Which the great God doth show;  
Fix that as thine aim and proceed. (76)

Karma proper to the body taken will always be fulfilled  
"We have given up deeds," declare the vain.  
Giving up all actions is not renunciation.  
We call this renunciation: freedom  
From malas five and tatvas thirty-six. (77)

Is there or not a Lord to protect all beings ?  
Are we too not of them ?  
Why cover and wrangle and worry, O heart ?  
Whatever must come, of itself will come. (78)

It will be dawn when thirty *naligais* have passed;  
 It will be dark when thirty more have passed.  
 It is so with everything, know thou, my heart,  
 In propitious times all deeds will come to fruit,  
 In unpropitious times all deeds will come to naught. (79)

Our being in the *sakala* state wherein we feel desires,  
 Lying immersed in the *kevala* state,  
 And remaining in the *suddha* state,  
 Wherein the tongue knoweth no blabbering  
 All is the work of Him who is beyond these three states. (80)

The bond is insentient and the soul  
 Knoweth not to cling of itself to the bond.  
 It is the Lord that linketh and moveth the two  
 And causeth strife always. (81)

If He Himself bestoweth not His Grace again,  
 Say, who is there who can attain salvation ?  
 My good heart, know this,  
 Plunging in the grace that is perfect joy  
 And mingling in the grace of worldly joy that stupefies  
 Are both the work of Him who knoweth all,  
 Who is immanent in all the universe. (82)

If in me there were no deed of Thine  
 Whatever befall, I must pray of thee, forsooth.  
 When it is not but that Thou dwellest in me  
 And workest as the life of my life  
 Am I the cause of acts, good or bad ? (83)

They are really great who seek not the name of greatness  
 Who restrain themselves in modesty, the Vedas proclaim  
 They are really small who boast that they are great;  
 Say, who in this world have to bear suffering  
 If these have not ? (84)

Though one doth learn all the shastras  
 And achieve the eight great siddhis.  
 While still in the body, the seat of troubles,  
 If one's desire be not set on the Supreme Bliss  
 One's lot will certainly be unhappiness, understand ! (85)

It is Hara who dwelleth in the mind  
 Speech and body and soul and moveth them  
 Who giveth enjoyment of food and like things  
 Who uniteth the soul in states like wakefulness  
 Who giveth deliverance to it,  
 Or maketh it travail in births. (86)

Whatever the deeds will be that the grace of the Supreme  
 Shall arrange to be done through us  
 In accordance with our karma in the past; who knows?  
 What scope have we to say,  
 "We'll do this work, we'll not do that,  
 We'll roam about or remain here,  
 We will save ourselves" and so on? (87)

If there be the karma to be undergone, as sure as you are  
 It will bind your feet down to your suffering.  
 Neither wander about questioning  
 Nor burn in anguish repeating "God of Tillai, Oh!"  
 Peace, be still, my heart. (88)

When I come to know nothing is mine, but all Thy work,  
 What desire shall I have or what speak forth, O Lord,  
 Howsoever thou plannest further and further  
 To redeem me, a dog, so may Thy Will be done. (89)

The fools understand not that it is hard  
 That bindeth with threads of Karma  
 The wooden puppet, body, that worketh wickedness,  
 And maketh it dance in good and bad  
 They assert these as their own doings!  
 Is there anything like this deserving to be laughed at? (90)

Though the soul be released  
 From anava and tatvas thirty-six  
 And attain the gift of Ananda,  
 Can it do away with ruinous karma  
 Excepting that it may with detachment look at it? (91)

Though the wise be sinking  
 In the joys and sorrows that happen  
 And acquiesce in thinking

In terms of I and mine,  
 If they see by Grace, the body  
 As distinct from the soul,  
 Can karma ever prevail ? No ! (92)

There is no other foe nor friend on earth  
 One's own mind is both foe and friend,  
 That the mala that binds thee may be broken  
 Shiva moves thee in the body  
 Accordant with thy karma, understand ! (93)

Knowing that such a deed, in such a place  
 At such a time, in such a way  
 By such a thing will reach one,  
 That deed, in that place, at that time, in that way,  
 Without difference will the Lord make it reach one. (94)

Except as the Being without beginning, ordained in the beginning  
 Will anything afresh happen to-day ?  
 Look to Him alone, who worketh untiringly for ever.  
 Be not distressed. (95)

Who are great, who are small,  
 Who are kith, who are foe,  
 If He whose form is joy and knowledge,  
 Great in glory, great in name,  
 Being Himself everywhere,  
 Everywhere doth make and move  
 All knowing and unknowing world ? (96)

Thou of noble thoughts, of Southern Kamalai, Jnanaprakash,  
 Thy thoughts know fully well all the trouble I have suffered  
 For having thought that Thy thoughts were my thoughts,  
 Instead of thinking that my thoughts were thine own. (97)

Of what one doeth daily, accordant with the determining karma  
 Not for a wink of time is any deed vain;  
 Uma's Lord knoweth all and maketh those  
 Proficient in His service comprehend. (98)

Arch Hara, won't it do to give straight away with Grace  
 The bliss that is of mine intelligence ?

Why is it that slowly Thou dost tease me,  
Roast me in wicked deeds,  
And unite me to wisdom, say ? (99)

Now, on whose head is it written  
On Thine, unasked to approach me in mala,  
Take me out, make me Thy servant in the supreme House  
Thou hast given me and from which there is no returning ?  
Or on mine to follow Thee  
And pray to Thee to make me Thy servant ? (100)

Can the body come without reason ?  
Can illness come without reason ?  
Can joy and sorrow come without reason ?  
They are all the deeds of Shiva's grace  
Accordant with our deeds in the past  
Seek desiring after Him who flings them at you. (101)

Wicked karma will not be their lot.  
Even if it be, they will simply say  
It is all Shiva's work,—they  
Who never separate ever so little  
From the Grace of Jnanaprakash  
Who dwelleth in Kamalai, which attracteth the good. (102)

Uniting and having united, separating  
Moving and having moved, quieting,  
Showing and having shown, hiding  
Think all these to be predetermined  
According to the will of the brow-eyed God. (103)

Can that which existeth go ?  
Can what doth not exist come into being ?  
Will not the flood ever flow into low land ?  
Roguish, foolish, simple mind that blabbereth as if mad,  
Do you think Shiva is dead and gone ? (104)

If we believed the Lord a weakling  
We might be afraid of danger to the Temple,  
If it is the Lord Himself who buildeth  
And having built, destroyeth,  
Why should we turn to others and blame them ? (105)

Supreme One, a danger hath come, alas,  
 The country and the temples are together tossed,  
 Shall I blame the country's king for that  
 Or shall I blame Thee that feedeth the karma  
 That is to come ? (106)

From *Shivabhogasaram*, 17th century

Tr. by P. M. Somasundaram

## The Holy Sports of the Lord

### PARANJOTI

SAINT PARANJOTI (Parañjoti, 17th century) belonged to Vendaranyam, now in Nagapattinam District. He was initiated in his early life by his father. He went on pilgrimage to holy places like Tiruvaroor, Tiruvanaikoil, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, etc. Enroute he came to Madurai. Blessed by Lord Sundareswarar's consort Meenakshi (Parvati) in his dream, Saint Paranjoti composed *Tiruvilaiyatal Puranam* (Tiruvilaiyātal Purāṇam). It is considered as a Sthalapurānam of Madurai, since it vividly depicts the *lilas* of Lord Sundareswarar (Shiva) at Madurai. There are 64 such *lilas* which are divided into 3 cantos, comprising 68 *patalams*, describing 64 divine sports in 3632 stanzas. The *lilas* are of varied emotions, some fantastic and some gruesome. It is also loaded with supernatural elements.

These divine sports prove the Lord's omnipresent and omnipotent nature. The piece given here portrays the elaborate arrangements made for the wedding ceremony of Lord Shiva with Tadatagai (Parvati) at Madurai in an emblazoned manner.

The moment the Lady's wedding drums sounded  
 those who dwelt in that fortified city  
 boundlessly rejoiced, praising God with their hands clasped,  
 feeling gooseflesh on their bodies, and singing praises.  
 As ornaments improve the beauty of women naturally beautiful,  
 so all of this city's sweet, natural beauty  
 they made more beautiful as they began to decorate it. (48)

Women and men cleared away the (growing) accumulations  
 of flower garlands mixed with sandalwood paste.  
 To control the rising dust they sprinkled cool, sweet rosewater.  
 Because of the joyous confusion  
 the wedding of the queen was causing,  
 they went about their work unaware that their own ornaments:  
 ear-rings, bangles, and necklaces, were all slipping off. (49)

People asked each other, "What day will the wedding occur?"  
 Those who said it would be the coming Monday,  
     the people embraced immediately.  
 They overflowed with the joy of difficult anticipation.  
 The passing of the six days before next Monday would be like the  
     passing of six cosmic ages. (50)

"Is it [in anticipation] to see the Lady's wedding  
     that our shoulders are twitching?" they asked.  
 They whitewashed walls and set up in rows  
     Paintings that would please even expert painters.  
 Smearing cosmetic paste on veranda floors, they set up rows  
     of golden water-pots filled with sprouting seedlings  
     and tender mango leaves that emerged from the tops of the pots.  
 And they hung decorations around their doorways. (51)

Throughout the wide, jewelled streets  
     they erected large pavilions over sidewalks.  
 In rows they set up betel-nut palms with bunches of fruit,  
     tasty sugarcane stalks, banana trees with ripe bunches of fruit.  
 They put up mirrors strung together, as though the nine planets  
     were suspended in that place.  
 And, more, they placed flags in rows so high that the seven horses  
     that pull the shining sun would stumble if they passed by. (52)

They sprinkled cool rose water and flowers,  
     scattered gold dust mixed with parched rice,  
     set up female statues holding lamps.  
 In pavilions they hung green garlands.  
     Everywhere they hung garlands  
     of precious stones, emeralds, and pearls,  
     so that the beautiful streets seemed like open-air markets. (53)

They decorated the foreheads of battle elephants with red vermillion  
     and placed on them plates of gold, inlaid with firelike jewels.  
 Fast-running horses they adorned with jewels  
     on their necks, legs, and saddles.  
 To the luminous chariots on which they hung  
     flower garlands and yak-tail fans, they hitched horses.  
     With faultless golden plates they made auspicious oil lamps  
     adorned with the nine precious stones. (54)





As though the wedding rituals would occur in their own homes  
 the towns people shouted,  
 prepared food with all the six tastes  
 for the Vedic scholars to enjoy,  
 honored ascetics welcomed them, saying,  
 "Your offerings are being cooked here !"  
 received Shiva's devotees,  
 performed worship by prescribed rules. (60)

This, then, was how they decorated the city.  
 The Bridegroom was without equal, and since the Bride was as well,  
 how could it be said that we have equals,  
 that any other excellent city could equal  
 the excellence of our fortified city ?  
 And so now I describe how the relatives of the Bride  
 decorated the marriage pavilion. (61)

Tall chariots reaching high as the sky they arranged in rows.  
 It was as though all the sacred mountains  
 had approached the city to see their Lord's daughter,  
 or as though the Lady who appeared in the luminous moon-dynasty  
 had arranged in rows chariots taken [as booty] that day  
 in Her victorious battle over Indra  
 whose vehicle is the dark clouds of the sky. (62)

On both sides [of the wedding pavilion] were steps of pure gold,  
 and elephants, seven cubits high, carved from marble.  
 There were rows of lion like monsters with tusks made from  
 brilliant sapphire on the porches inlaid with gems.  
 There were latticed, emerald windows  
 interspersed on shining crystal walls  
 that refracted images of approaching visitors  
 as though they were dancing, painted figures. (63)

There were a thousand coral pillars on which were carved many forms,  
 and above them were capitals shaped in sapphire.  
 There were beautiful crossbeams made of gold,  
 and crossbeams of darkness-dispelling rubies on the veranda  
 with an upper story of bright-fashioned stone from the cool,  
 nectar-bodied moon.  
 From all these things was the sacrificial pavilion made. (64)

In rows they set up plantain trees with long leaves  
 made from shining green emeralds, golden stems,  
 hanging bunches of ripe fruit fashioned in pure gold,

and coral clusters of hanging flowers.

There were betel-nut palms, their abundant trunks done in silver,  
 their sweet fruit in red coral clusters,  
 dense green bunches of leaves in shining emerald,  
 and petals of pearl. (65)

Sprouting in rows around the pavilion  
 there were plants of gall-nut, basil, champaka flower,  
 trumpet flower, and others as well.  
 Open-mouthed bees buzzed as they visited  
 delicately-scented flowers dripping with sweet honey.  
 And the flowers in the gardens they planted  
 gave off drops of sweet honey to the gentle southern breezes  
 that wafted through the latticework windows. (66)

By relying on the ancient treatises  
 they established the sacrificial hall, the raised altar,  
 and the sacrificial fire pit, each with its proper boundaries.

They put in place, with properly crafted making,  
 the eight luminous, auspicious signs, said to include:  
 a mirror; a bull; a bright lamp; an image of Laksmi;  
 a large, shining yak-tail fly-whisk;  
 a conch shell with whorls to the right;  
 A swastika sign; and a full water pot. (67)

Fragrant saffron flowers and powders mixed with musk oil  
 were soaked in rosewater, made into a paste,  
 and then smeared in a wide area.  
 There were female statues holding up in both hands  
 lamps made of large jewels from the hoods of cobras:  
 lamps shining so brightly they shamed the sun.  
 They adorned the marriage pavilion on the underside of its ceiling  
 with a canopy inlaid with the nine kinds of gems  
 that shone like clusters of stars. (68)

In front of this excellent golden temple,  
 they placed a pavilion that reached up to the sky  
 and which seemed to spread throughout the eight directions.  
 Seeds were sown in beautiful golden pots.  
 Suitable for [Brahma] the lotus-born one, and other celestials,  
 a golden carpet was spread out, and seats placed on it. (69)

For the party of the one who wears tumpai flowers,  
 and long, matted hair  
 seats were placed in a circle and in the middle. . . .  
 they erected columns with square tops, and bases of luminous coral  
 all fixed on pedestals that stood on the napes of necks  
 of shining lions made from diamonds provided  
 by the Wish-granting Tree. (70)

They made beams of radiant crystal, cornices of coral,  
 three beautiful upper levels and according to the texts,  
 a shining cupula of many gems. Underneath it. . . .  
 for Our Lord to reign with Our Lady they prepared  
 a beautiful, golden throne embedded with the nine gems  
 and supported by the six Vedic commentaries as legs.  
 The first letter became the seat suspended by the four Vedas  
 strung with pearls as moving ropes.

*Tiruvilaiyatal Puranam*, 17th century

Tr. by William H. Harman

## Selections

### SHAIVA ELLAPPA NAVALAR

SHAIVA ELLAPPA NAVALAR (17th century) had deep devotion for the Shaiva cult; hence he was known as "Shaiva Ellappa Navalar". He established his name and fame in Sthalapuranas. *Arunachala Puranam*, *Tiruvirinjai Puranam*, *Teerthagiripuranam*, *Tiruvenkattupuranam* *Tiruchenkattanguti Puranam*, *Sevvanthi Puranam* are his noted works.

The excerpts given here are from *Tiruvarunai Kalampakam*.

### 1

In this poem the hero is speaking to his charioteer at the advent of the rainy season, when the tender liana of the heroine is frightened of thunder and lightning:

O you charioteer ! Driving the car with tinkling bells,  
 With cheerful arms like unto Arunachala Hills,  
 Where dwells Lord Shiva riding the Bull mount;  
 The Lord who has the four Vedas as horses;

The cloud sailing before us charged with water vapour,  
 Reverberates with thunder and flashes with lightning;

The cochineal insect is carpeting the ground  
While the iridescent rainbow hangs in the sky.

At the sight of all these, my beloved,  
Standing all alone trembling like a liana,  
Will be frightened very much;  
Therefore, do you drive the chariot fast  
That I may meet her soon.

## 2

## The Sarabam Bird of Arunachala

This poem is in praise of the bird of Arunachala city:

'Twas the Sarabam bird,  
Eight-footed and two-headed  
Flourishing in the hill city of Arunachala  
That destroyed the bright-eyed tiger,  
Sent by the seers of Taruka forest to vanquish Shiva,  
The same that subdued the rage of Narasimha,  
After he had slain the dreaded Hiranya,  
That excoriated the demon Gajasura  
Who came in the form of a mammoth  
With a fearful tubular trunk.

## 3

## Adorning the Forehead With Sacred Ash

This is an appeal to women to worship Shiva

Harken, Women !  
To our prognostication:  
The paddy grains brought in a winnowing fan  
When counted by ones and threes remain odd-numbered,  
Presaging only good.  
Hence there appeared before me,  
One with a doe in one hand  
And battleaxe in the other.  
He has a dark stain on His throat  
And a skull, that of Brahma in His hand.

If you seek Him, go to the holy Arunachala city  
And behold Him. His name is Devarayar.

We haven't seen any god other than He.  
Surely He will remove the anguish born of her desire.  
Hence adorn her forehead with sacred ash triple-lined.

4

### With What Aid Can She Face Her Foes

In this poem the heroine's maid is pleading with the hero:

O Lord ! ensconced in the lovely Arunachala hill  
Abounding in grace divine,  
The only god of truth in this Kaliyuga !  
Lord Prathabar adorned with fragrant civet,  
Who destroyed the triple cities !

Lord Devaraya, Vasantharaya  
Exuding eternal fragrance !  
Would Manmath dare shoot his flowery darts at You,  
Sporting a third eye in the forehead ?  
Would the South Wind coming up  
Dare harass You when you wear  
Serpents for Your jewels ?  
Would the moon dare afflict you  
When your divine feet are there, victorious ?  
Would the dense night, tenebrous,  
Stand before the sun-light of Your eyne ?  
You are powerful, ever free from affliction,  
But with what help can my lady face her foes ?

5

### The Rainy Season

In this poem the devotee, like a lovely lady, pines in separation from the Lord:

You lovely peafowls,  
Dancing joyously in the woods,  
Beside the Sonachala hill !

You cheerful streams !  
 Servitors true, gain the bliss of release,  
 Even if they think on Him for a moment.  
 How then my Lord has not blessed me  
 Though I seek Him all the time ?  
 Surely I've done evil and become a sinner great;  
 Why, else, should tears pour from my eyes ?  
 The dreary rainy season  
 Is mortal poison for those like me,  
 Languishing alone parted from my Lord.  
 Truly this never-ending rainy season  
 But marks the end of my life.

## 6

## My Lord Has Not Yet Come

This poem is in praise of Shiva:

O my friend  
 With slender-gait like the swan's,  
 Adorned with *punnai* flowers  
 And lovely dark tresses !  
 He, Lord Shiva, is adored by Thirumal and Brahma  
 Both morning and evening with folded hands.  
 He it is who created all this world in the wink of an eye.  
 He has father or mother none.  
 He does dance the divine dance,  
 Pulling like a puppeteer  
 All lives with the strings of past Karma.  
 He with true ascetic garb  
 Snaps the net of action:  
 Bearing the name of love-god, He does remove  
 The afflictions of the mind:  
 He does in grace gift away sixty-six thousand pieces of gold.  
 Great are His names: Vasanta Vinodan, Annamalayan.  
 Athirum Kazhalan, Kannaar Amudhan:  
 It is in the holy mount Kailas, the home of this Lord,  
 That the blacksmith Spring gave unto His friend  
 Kama, the god of Love,  
 His flowery arrows forged in the smithy of the grove,  
 Blowing into the forge the gentle southerly.

Using the pothiya mount in Yama's south as bellows,  
 And the tender shoots of plants burning like flames,

Fostered by black-spotted beetles as charcoal bits;  
Using the cuckoo's beak as tongs  
And flowery clusters as pincers.

The spring has come,  
Yet my lord has not.

7

The Lord of Arunachala Hills is Indeed The Lord of Grace

This is also a hymn addressed to Shiva;

The Lord ensconced in far-famed Arunachala hills,  
The Lord Annamalayar,  
Is one without any flaw, which is alien to him.  
Plaited great locks are His:  
He did perform a variant dance changing His raised foot.  
It was he again who received a blow  
From the cane of the Pandya kings,  
for Saint Manickavasakar's sake:  
He did preach Dharma  
Ever to be pondered by devotees.  
Free from blame that fetters,  
He does ride the bull-mount;  
He holds in his hand the dreaded deer set against him.  
He lives enshrined in my heart;  
He wears the hide of the tusker He quelled;  
He exudes the fragrance of the madar  
And the cassia blooms;  
He is the consort of Goddess Uma  
With lips like palash petals,  
Whom, lovely like the swan,  
He bears on His form of fire;  
Flowing Ganga He wears on His head;  
He is the Lord of Arunachala,  
The Lord of grace abounding.

8

We Will Do Things Not Done Yet

This hymn is also in praise of Shiva. It uses the device of *Sampratham* which consists of jugglery with words meaning different things.



Impossible things we will do:

We will make the sea dry, revealing scabs;  
We will cause scars in the sky;  
And the sun to appear in the north  
And Nirruti, one of the night guardians,  
To appear in the east;  
We will turn night into day,  
And day into night, with ease;

Are these alone our feats of magic?  
If we but think a little while,  
One of sacred Arunachala hill  
Of the Lord Annamalai adorned with serpents,  
The Lord who stood a column of fire,  
We'll even reveal a place on the earth  
Matching in merit the holy Arunachala,  
That bestows the bliss of Liberation.

*Tiruvārunai Kalampakam*, 17th century

Tr. by K. G. Seshadri

## Selections

### KATIKAI MUTTU PULAVAR

KATIKAI MUTTU PULAVAR (1665-17300) was the court-poet of the Ettayapuram Zamindar. His poems are the best examples for the unbridled exposures of love-lorn hearts. Among his chief compositions are *Samudra Vilasam* (Samudra Vilāsam), *Mathana Vithara Malai* (Madanavitara Mālai), *Tiruvitai Marudhur Antati*, *Tikku Vijayam* and *Kamaraja Manjari*.

Excerpts from the first two poems are given below:

#### 1

### To the Sea

This is a poem in the form of pun which compares the procession of the hero to a sea.

O dark main, you comfort me  
and appear like the procession  
of my prince—Venkatesu Rettan !  
You never transgress your bourne;

You forsake nor the hollow pits on your sides;  
 Numberless *chanks* are teeming in you;  
 Parks in pairs, for ever, sail over you.  
 Pouring clouds, for ever, sail over you.  
 You are the cause of the world that you engird;  
 In you thrive resounding  
     and tumultuous currents numberless;  
 From you raise and fall unseen  
     mighty billows into great depths.  
 You battle against the guarding shore.  
     As for me, I rest not on the plaited mat  
         or the lofty seat.  
 I indulge in no mistaken speculation.  
 Pray, hearken to me not nonchalantly.  
 Ha, the march of my prince Venkatesu Rettan,  
     is like the dark ocean that rolls before me.  
 In this march—  
     the woven wreaths of your participants  
         part not from them;  
 Witnessing crowds throng close by;  
 Shoulders swell in joy in glowing charm;  
 hearts are filled with truthful glory;  
 in this world, your close-knit soldiery thrives well;  
 They gain victory in the dinsome fields of war;  
 Here they abide not for ever, but march on  
 with majestic tuskers and upright steeds.

2

The Heroine in Distress, Addresses the Sea

O sea, of yore you bred Goddess Lakshmi and the Moon;  
 Besides you bear on your bosom Vishnu;  
 You feed the clouds with your tumultuous waves.  
     I too cause my beauty and forehead  
         to glow resplendent;  
 I also wear beauteous wreath;  
 My locks are darker than murk;  
 My eyes are sharp like darts.  
 Like the cloud of the rainy season,  
     He, Venkatesu Rettan, pours,  
         (his gifts) and protects us.  
 I come forth to behold his procession,  
 And you roll before the shore fronting you.

So, O sea, the world proclaims  
 that we resemble each other.  
 O you creek !  
 O you leaping wealth  
 of the roaring tide !  
 O you schools of shells !  
 Hearken to what I relate to you!

## 3

This is Also in the Form of a Pun.  
 The God of Love is Compared to the Sea.

The love-god stands holding  
 a bow of sugarcane;  
 You own the roar of the black billows.  
 night, the tusker, is the love-god's mount;  
 You have passage was where into roll your waves.  
 O creek near which pens lay eggs  
 on fragrant lotuses where they abide !  
 You are dark in hue.  
 Does it become you to alienate damsels in love ?  
 You burrow and dig deep into the earth !  
 Lo ! he is Venkatesu Rettan  
 in whose bosom Lakshmi dwells.  
 He is a triumphant hero.  
 O drum that the love-god sounds  
 when my prince hugs me not !  
 Alas, why did you invite the love-god  
 when it is night ?  
 O sea whose foreshore is dotted with trees  
 of fragrant screw-pine !  
 I am scared by you, even you, who are  
 favourable to sea-farers !  
 My friends and my own mother  
 show me love no longer !  
 O traitor ! You indeed are the equal  
 of pain-inflicting love-god.

## 4

Distressed by love, the heroine addresses beings and things associated with the sea. In this poem the Potiyil Hill is compared to a sea.

In the billows of the sea

the long and argent *chanks*  
and the sea dwelling turtles graze;  
the far-extending sheets of water  
roll with spume and spray;  
they dash against the great ships  
and roll backwards.

In the Potiyil Hill

the tall and stately trees graze the sky;  
the dark nimbi of the Hill sail over it;  
the Hill for ever remains, unmoved;  
from it rush amain the cataracts;  
the tops of sandal-trees stay the moon;  
in the Hill are trees whose branches sway.

So, the Hill resembles the sea.

The lord of this Hill is Venkatesu Rettan.

Behold the ford of the sea that delights him!

O ye throngs of puissant frogs ! Behold

the bangles that have slipped from my hands

O ye clouds that hover in the midst

of the wide-extending ocean !

None is afraid to deride me !

O beauteous water-lily the lovely liana !

My breasts are the target of the love-god's darts !

My friends befuddle me.

Is there none to secure for me

the jasmine wreath from my hero ?

5

A Poem in the Form of a Pun Which Compares the  
Potiyil Hill to Lord Shiva

Ever-during ear-rings wrought of shell  
dangle in his ears;

He is ever concorporate with Uma.

His great neck displays the stain  
of the venom—the Aalakaala;

The long adder adorns His crown;

Thus, even thus, is Shiva.

The innumerable leaves of numberless trees  
toss in the wind;

Its cataracts and bamboos for ever

flourish in splendour;

The Hill is moist with the water that pours

from the clouds on high;  
 Ceaseless din, for ever, pervades the Hill.  
 Thus, even thus, is the Potiyil Hill  
 that resembles Lord Shiva.  
 O creek delighting Venkatesu Rettan,  
 the chief of Ilasai !  
 O crab that lies hid !  
 will not lassess me calmisrke ?  
 Unfading leaves, long and soft !  
 There is none to pity me, alas !  
 O thicket of palm-trees—  
 the pleasing habitat of birds !  
 Will the flesh of sheep serve as victuals  
 for our wrathful mother ?  
 Who is there to extirpate  
 the misery of my heart ?  
 O Aaral <sup>1</sup>, speak to me of a remedy  
 for my malady.  
 The point is the mother is about to  
 arrange a Veriyaadal<sup>2</sup>  
 in which sheep will be sacrificed.

*Samudravilasam*, 17th century

*Tr.* by T. N. Ramachandran

2

### A Garland of Praise for the Love-God

This is a work about the omnipotence of the god of love. It describes his impact on the girls of the town when its chief, Marudappan drives in state through its main streets:

Marudappan, our Lord, the beloved son  
 Of Tiruvenkatanathan, the elder brother  
 Of Seevalavan, the blessed ruler  
 Served with love, as their wedded lord,  
 By the goddess of earth who wears the sea  
 As her dress, who embraces his shoulders  
 Adorned with garlands, by the goddess of wealth  
 Residing in his eyes, served with fervour

1. Spiny Cell

2. Ritualistic dance of frenzy.

By the goddess of charity residing in his hands.  
 By the goddess of learning living in his tongue  
 And by all the others at his service.  
 Marudappan, the triumphant, armed with the sword—  
 How fervent is the love that the women of this world  
 Bear towards him in the sincere hope  
 That he would notice and take pity  
 And give them his love; O lord of love,  
 Who takes delight in torturing them,  
 You purvey gifts of love to people  
 And thus perpetuate the miasma  
 of delusions, you take up residence.  
 In Kannan's Dwaraka as His beloved son  
 And operate your bow and quiver of arrows  
 on all those men who noticed the gopis—  
 The cow - herdesses " who are all your mothers"  
 The men who observed the drops of sweat  
 So sweetly spotting their comely fore heads,  
 When armed with flowers which are your arrows  
 You start on the war-path, flushed with anger  
 You do not ever discriminate  
 Between the good and the virtuous and those that are sinners;  
 We have noticed this, O lord of love,  
 For, the world's creator kept concealed  
 His consort under His soft-fleshed tongue  
 And Madhava secreted His wife in His chest.  
 Further, when Shiva, parting from  
 His lifemate went and sat beneath  
 The spreading banyan to perform penance,  
 You pursued Him and bending your bow,  
 The bow of sugarcane and aimed an arrow,  
 It sped like a streak of blazing fire  
 And poked a wound on the Lord's forehead.  
 They glorify this wound as the Lord's third eye;  
 But none would claim that Shiva, the Terrible,  
 Worsted you in the field of battle.  
 Even if He did defeat you,  
 Could he stand up to the demanding norms  
 Of the disguise he wore, that of an ascetic  
 Or did he fall off from the standards high,  
 Impelled hard by feelings of love ?  
 He got wedded and in holy terror  
 Of your nature to dominate,  
 He gave the daughter of the mountain a half

Of His own body to occupy,  
It is loosely said that it was Brahma  
Of Tirumal or Shiva that created all  
The population of this earth. It may be  
That they did create it in the first instance  
But without strident love's impulse,  
The passion that fuses the male and the female,  
Can children be born on the face of the earth ?  
And don't we know that love's upsurge  
Is the harvest of your playful acts ?  
Thoughtful elders demonstrate  
How, smitten by the pangs of love,  
Indra had to turn into a fowl,  
Nahusha into a serpent and Muruga the Lord  
Was forced to assume the form of a tree.  
Indra, the suzerain lord of the heavens,  
Acquired a thousand eyes  
On his handsome body—are not these  
The flashwounds which your arrows made ?  
And isn't it true that the gods of the heavens  
In their anxious zeal to keep away  
From your murderous onslaught, hid themselves  
Securely in the gold-peaked mountain ?  
O god of love: could the terrible vow  
Of Rishyasrnga keep him safe.  
From your attentions ? You aimed your shafts  
At Kaushika, the ascetic, urging him  
To nurse a passion for women-folk  
Which made him go up to the assemblage  
Of the god for the sake of Tilottama,  
It was not Tirumal, as widely believed,  
That ended the lives at the guileless brothers  
Sunda and the younger Upasunda;  
It was, in fact, the arrows you wield,  
The lotus flower, that caused the havoc.  
It wasn't a sin, as believed by the people.  
Mohini that denied nectar to the demons,  
It was the flowery arrow you fired,  
It was the mullai that did the trick !  
When Brahma, assailed by the tender passion,  
Had his fifth head severed down.  
It wasn't Shiva who did the deed,  
It was the ashoka shaft you flung.

It wasn't again Shiva of Hari  
 That ruined the penance of the ascetics  
 Of the Daruka woods; it was your arrow  
 Of mango blossom that fed the flames  
 Of a passionate love that burnt it up.  
 Besides these, was it Tirumal  
 Of the colour of a dark, rain-bearing cloud.  
 That burnt to ashes Toonduma,  
 The ascetic assailed by powerful passion ?  
 It wasn't He, it was the impact  
 Of the arrow you wield, the blue-bell blossom.  
 Ravana who went on a triumphant campaign,  
 Conquering all that dared oppose him—  
 Could he humble you ? O god of love  
 You bent your bow of sugar-cane  
 And lo ! he suffered, earning the curse  
 Of a woman, it was he who got worsted.  
 None indeed can restrain those  
 Whose passions have been fully roused  
 By the action of your flowery arrows  
 Shot by you with your flaming anger.  
 Impelled by the force of your shafts  
 The Pandava brothers, five in number,  
 All enjoyed a single woman  
 In conjugal bliss. Even Tirumal  
 Has demonstrated how when passion  
 Strikes a person, he doesn't stop  
 To examine the limits set by  
 Propriety and tradition  
 By falling in love with his own aunt  
 Radha by name. Even the creator  
 Did not hesitate but plunged ahead  
 To derive different kinds of bliss  
 Afforded by sex, through union  
 With Tilottama, his own daughter.  
 The moongod had an intercourse  
 With the wife of his guru, Brihaspati,  
 O God of love, is there a limit  
 To your glory, to your prowess ?  
 Shiva, by your arrows maddened,  
 Wishing to have a look at her organ  
 Commanded Drona's wife to serve Him



After stripping herself naked.  
Broken by your shafts of love  
Aimed in anger, Tirumal seized  
And secreted away the dress of all  
The youthful girls of the cowherd's village.  
Bhishma's father, Santanu  
The mighty emperor of the Kuru clan,  
Fell for the charms of a fisher-folk girl.  
And Muruka, the Lord, allowed Himself  
To get ensnared by a hill-tribe lass.  
Do thou, struck by your shafts of love,  
O Formless One, stop to see  
If the status and the family  
Of those they love are suitable ?  
Conflagrations cannot harbour  
Areas of dampness within.  
O deity of the tender passion,  
Tormented by your sharp missiles,  
The lord of the gods fell in love  
With Damayanti and to her despatched  
Her own lover as his messenger !  
And when she turned down his overtures  
He took the form of Nala, proceeding  
To the wedding-hall, raising doubts  
About his own authenticity.  
On the impact of your floral shafts,  
Men develop such a passion for  
the divine damsels, they organise  
And perform a hundred sacrifices  
To inherit the throne of the lord of heaven.  
Whatever you plan, O god of love,  
The three worlds all carry it out  
Without question. Shiva is known  
As Shankara, too, the one that grants  
All auspicious things to the worshipper.  
In the firm belief that Shankara  
Who moves about on a great white bull  
Will bless them with bliss, many in the world  
Have done terrific bouts of penance  
Decimating their bodies and  
Putting in custody their active senses.

We have seen them torturing thus  
 Their own bodies till we wonder  
 If they can enjoy anything at all,  
 After all their toil. We have also seen  
 Hedonists with romance in their hearts  
 Who worship none but you, O love-god !  
 They repose on a bed of blossoms  
 And enjoying the titillation  
 Of their sharpened senses do they derive  
 The fullest pleasure that a bed affords,  
 With girls on all sides supporting them  
 With their hands of eider-down  
 And their breasts that can proffer  
 The beatitude that's out of this earth.

*Madana Vithara Malai*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by A. V. Subramani

## A Hundred Verses for Appalishvara

### AMBALAVANAK KAVIRAYAR

AMBALAVANAK KAVIRAYAR (Ambalavānak Kavirāyar 18th century) is the author of *Arappalishvara Shatakam* which is one of the remarkable works of didactic literature, displaying many codes of conduct. Nothing is known about him.

Five verses from this work are given below.

#### *Chaff*

An eminent person, who does not know  
 how to voice his talent, is chaff;  
 One, who crouches when an enemy appears  
 with a wadding sword, is chaff;  
 One, who is abhorred by others,  
 whom he disparages, is chaff;  
 One who cohabits with an  
 adulteress, is chaff;  
 One, who speaks of himself, rather than be  
 praised by others, is chaff;  
 One who deludes the whores and  
 ..deserts his confidante, is chaff

Vanquish our distress and poverty

O Lord, Arappalishvara !  
 The tutelary deity of my patron, dear Madhavel. (12)

*Efficacious in Abatement*

Will the innate fragrance of Sandal be diminished  
 When it is reduced in size?  
 Will the deliciousness of milk be decreased  
 when it is reduced by boiling ?  
 Will the excellence of the bead be blurred  
 When it became smutty ?  
 Will the value of gold be deflated  
 when it is melted in fire ?  
 Will the luminousness of the moon be masked  
 When it is concealed by the cloud ?  
 Will the greatness of the learned be in shroud  
 When it is ignored by the muffs ?  
 Lord ! you never dissociate the wise !  
 Lord, Arappalishvara !  
 The tutelary deity of my patron, dear Madhavel. (23)

*Utility of Unity*

A collection of hay, turned into a rope,  
 Will help to chain a mammoth !  
 A collection of water-drops, forming a river,  
 will fill the ponds and lakes !  
 A collection of cotton, turned into yarns,  
 will help to weave the cloth !  
 The combination of rod and a cloth  
 will make a parasol !  
 The envelop of bran and husk with a seed-grain  
 will yield lively sprouts !  
 The congregation of masses in consensus  
 will result in a prosperous life !  
  
 Lord ! you, hard for the quest of Vishnu and Brahma,  
 Lord ! Arappalishvara,  
 The tutelary deity of my patron, dear Madhavel ! (32)

*The Beauteous City*

Oh so many ponds, wells and rivers,

the mountainous range at a distance;  
 with plantain, areca and coconut-palm in abundance.  
 the paddy fields with proper irrigation;  
 With blue nelumbo, lotus and lily filling the lakes;  
 Prosperous merchants, brahmins and others in unison;  
 With an efficient ruler and a mighty palace,  
 temples of celestial deities and houses merry with dance and tune;  
 With a city of noble inhabitants  
 that provide some means to earn one's bread;  
 That is the city of heaven all crave for !

Lord, Arappalishvara,  
 The tutelary deity of my patron, dear Madhavel ! (48)

### *A Sinister City*

A habitation of divided sects,  
 with hedges of thorn in front of dwellings;  
 Ladies haunting with breasts open  
 and hair dishevelled;  
 Near the woods and beside the hills,  
 always struck with intermittent fever;  
 Fear of pillage  
 and water from a deep well, the only sustenance;  
 A leader helpful to felons  
 is for more plaintive  
 Than living in inferno or hell,  
 O Lord !  
 The tutelary deity of my patron, dear Madhavel ! (49)

From *Arappalishvara Shatakam*, 18th century

Tr. by K. Raja

## Selections

### ENNAYINA PULAVAR

ENNAYINA PULAVAR is considered by some scholars the author of *Mukkoodal Pallu* (Mukkūdal Paḷḷu). No other information is available. Some scholars believe the work is anonymous.

### 1

### Mukkoodal Pallu

With a mark of turmeric paste on her forehead

And holy ash smeared above it,  
 With the parting of the hair  
 And the loose black knot of it,  
 With a fitting iron bracelet,  
 With betel in her hand,  
 And chewing betel-nut in her mouth  
 With her lips gently opening  
 Every time a folded betel passes in,  
 With the nipples of the two breasts  
 Erect and pointing to the powerful black eyes  
 Attain their blackness and droop a little  
 To avoid the eyes' blackness spreading,  
 With golden silk adorning the slender waist,  
 Appears elder Pallu of Mukkoodal on the stage.

## 2

## Maruthoor Pallu

With Kochi turmeric pasted beautifully over her rosy feet,  
 With green leaves worn by her giving out fragrance,  
 With holy ash smeared on her  
 Growing, moon-like, small forehead glowing,  
 With eyes adorned with collyrium,  
 Brightening the knotted-hair on the sides,  
 And the ornaments of the ears,  
 With the large alluring breasts,  
 Like tusks of a spirited elephant, moving  
 With the *tali* borne to the chain  
 Of blue diamond glittering,  
 With the silk adorning the *vanchi* creeper-like waist  
 And the beauty of the five colours in it blooming  
 The Pallu of Maruthoor appeared on the stage.

## 3

## The Arrival of Pallan

With a moustache twisted like  
 The horn of an irritable male sheep,  
 With the side-whiskers well-groomed with scissors

And the cheek appearing beautiful,  
 With the sash tightly tied around the waist  
 Along with the weapon *vazhuthadi*,  
 With the head-dress spotted with gold,  
 With the blue-coloured knotted hair,  
 Bouncing while stumbling  
 And nodding the head, if pierced,  
 Waving the silk, and belching  
 While stepping forward,  
 Laughing without cause in drunken frenzy  
 Appears the handsome *Kutumban* on the stage.

4

Pallan Speaks about His Greatness

I'll plough the heart—  
 Considering it as sterile land—  
 Of those who never think of  
 The unique lotus-like feet of Lord Alagar;  
 I'll cut the ears with a spade—  
 As I clear the bushes in a barren land—  
 Of those who never seek from our great leader  
 The literary truth of valuable books;  
 I'll fasten the devilish feet of those—  
 to the plough with a strong rope—  
 Those who don't adore  
 The hundred and eight Holy Hymns of Lord Perumal;  
 I'll consider those,  
 Who don't learn Thiruvai Mozhi,  
 As two-legged bulls  
 And beat them up with a cudgel.

5

Squint-eyed and Stomach

Shaped like a bad stuffed with cotton,  
 With the bald head like a churn-head,  
 With teeth like the sees of bottle-gourd  
 Pale, snooty and stinking nostrils,

Mouth shaped like crushed mango-nut  
 Eroded by flies  
 Irregularly grown hair of the moustache—  
 Five or six in number—  
 Walking like a dull and drowsy buffalo  
 With a bald, barren face  
 Ugly ears, uneven and upturned  
 The landlord of the brave Alagar's Mukkoodal  
 Appears on the stage.  
 The landlord Mukkoodal talks to elder Pallu;  
 Looking at her face  
 He listens to the younger Pallu  
 With a deep sigh  
 He calls "Kaathi", daughter of "Saathi"  
 His "pethi" (grand-daughter)  
 And signals to her secretly  
 To come to the field afterwards,  
 Leaning on his stout stick  
 He sees her with his squint eyes.  
 With the filthy mouth to smoke  
 He approaches the fire.  
 He chides the Pallan as a simpleton  
 Who doesn't guard his wife.  
 He sleeps in a hut.

*Mukkoodal Pallu*, 18th century

Tr. by V. Ayothi

## Commentary on the Eleventh Aphorism

### SIVAJNANA MUNIVAR

SHIVAJNANA MUNIVAR (Sivajnāna Munivar, ?-1785) was born at Vikkiramasingapuram near Papanasam. His parents were Anandha Kuttar and Mayilammai. The parent named their child Mukkalalingar, who later became renowned as Shivajnana Munivar or Tambiran. In his younger days Mukkalalingar happened to meet and serve some of the Sanyasins who come from Tiruvavaduturai Mutt. Having decided to renounce this world, Mukkalalingar expressed his desire to his father. His father took him to Tiruvavaduturai where he was initiated and offered saffron robe by Pin Valappa Desigar, the junior pontiff of the Mutt. In his later life he was offered the position of the junior Head of the mutt, but he declined the offer, saying "I am here in this world only to worship and not to be worshipped". He was a great poet, grand rhetorician, a profound scholar, an able commentator, an outstanding logician and above all an excellent teacher.

*Panchakkar Desigar Malai*, *Ahiladesvari Patikam* and *Amutambikai Pillai Tamil* are some of his minor works. *Shivajnana Mapadiyam* (Sivajnāna Mapadiyam), the elaborate commentary on Meykandar's *Shivajnanabodham*, is his magnum opus.

Like the self that enables the seeing eyes to see, the Lord sees and makes the self see. So in unforgetting love the self reaches the feet of Hara. This is the aphorism.

#### Intention:

This aphorism intends to tell the way in which the sacred feet are obtained.

#### Exposition:

The attainment of the self is two-fold. The first part is the removal of letters which was dealt with in the tenth aphorism. The second part is the attainment of Shiva and it is dealt with here in the eleventh aphorism. Besides this, it also does two other things. In the last aphorism, the aspirant was instructed to abide unfailingly in the service of the Lord. The explanation of the service of the Lord was in keeping the content of st. 64 of *Tiru-k-kalimur*—*padiyar* which says: Shiva is the doer and there is no other doer; my knowledge is Shiva's knowledge and my doings are his. Thus to disown these (is the means).

Here the objective of the self's three-fold potency, the cognitive, affective and conative, are mentioned. If they do not objectify anything, there is the objection that what is said as means in Siddhanta is mere vacuum like the *Alaya Vignana*<sup>1</sup> mentioned by the Buddhists. This objection is removed here and the objection mentioned while expressing the second part of the self's attainment. With a view to establish its cause, the last aphorism spoke of the oneness with the Lord. But the relation involved in it was not mentioned there. That relation is shown here in this aphorism. In the removal of fetters, which was dealt with in the last aphorism, the removal of the traces of *prarabdha* was not obtained; that is obtained here by the process, "Is it necessary to mention". This expanded meaning is the content implied of the intention of the eleventh aphorism, mentioned by the author.

From the exposition it will be observed that by the removal of objection the relevance of the topic is obtained and by the fulfilment of conventional order the relevance of chapter is obtained. The mention of relation and the answer to the question how *prarabdha* is removed are obtained by satisfying

1. *Alaya Vignana* of the Buddhists is consciousness devoid of content. The Siddhanta does not accept the view that in freed state there is no object for self's thought, desire and action, in which case the freed state would be a state of non-existence.



the natural desire; by this, the relevance of Aphorism is obtained.

The following objection may suggest itself to some readers. For those who are in oneness with the Lord and who abide in the Lord's service no other effort is necessary. Also, as the removal of darkness and the coming in of the illumination take place simultaneously, the removal of fetters and the attainment of Shiva take place simultaneously. So it is unnecessary to speak of them separately. It is because of this reason, in the Sanskrit tenth sutra these two things are dealt with together by the addition of the expression, "*Svanu/bhuti/man bhavati*." So the separate formulation of the eleventh aphorism may be objected to. But it must be understood that this objection is due to ignorance of true *Svanu/bhuti/man bhavati* means—He has his experience.

To be in oneness with the Lord and to abide in Lord's service belong to the fourth state which ensures oneness with the grace alone (*Turiya Arul nila*). Here there is the removal of impurity and there will only be the manifestation of the light of the Bliss. But the blissful state of manifestation of Shivatva happens only in the fifth and last state which is known as Turiyatita. So in order to get the manifestation of Bliss, it is evident that something more has to be performed. In the removal of impurity there will be simultaneous happening of the manifestation of Lord's grace, even as the coming in of the light happens simultaneously with the absence of darkness. But the manifestation of Bliss will not happen. There is difference between the manifestation of grace and that of bliss. The Sanskrit version introduces *Svanubhati* in the tenth Sutra only to remind the disciple that release consists of two elements, the removal of impurity and the attainment of Shiva. But it speaks of all things concerning the attainment of Shiva (for bliss) in the eleventh Sutra alone. The purification of the self which was begun in the ninth aphorism ends in the tenth aphorism. So also, the experience of Bliss which was begun in the tenth aphorism is concluded in the eleventh. It is known clearly by the use of the expression, "The self reaches the feet of Hara, "which is the exact meaning of the Sanskrit expression "*Svanubhutiman bhavati*". This is in no way contradictory to the intention.

Those that do not know this will speak of the state of atita along with the state of turiya in the tenth aphorism itself and classify the eleventh like the twelfth aphorism as giving the nature of the state of Jivanmukti. This is not correct. The author Meykandar himself has given the intention of the eleventh aphorism as giving the way in which the sacred feet are attained. *Svanubhuti man bhavati* of the Sanskrit tenth Sutra should be attached to the end of the eleventh Sutra while interpreting the sutra. The expression should be added after 'make devotion'. That *Svanubhuti* will be attained only after making devotion.

**Paraphrase of the aphorism:**

As the eye has the nature to see as it is caused to see, the self in union with the eye causes it to see and itself sees. Similarly, god in union with the self causes it to know and He Himself knows. When the self knows this help rendered by god, being in union with it in advaita relation, it has the unforgetting love, which enables it to attain the experience of divine bliss, the sacred feet of god.

When a thing is seen the eye and the self are both active at the same time and it is difficult to separate the seeing of the eye and the perceiving of the self. They are blended together in inseparableness. In the same manner when a thing is objectified the action of the self and the help rendered by the Absolute are blended together inseparably and we cannot say if the thing was known to the self or to the Absolute behind it. This help is being rendered of the Absolute from eternity both in the state of bondage and in the state of release. The self which has been in oneness with the Absolute abiding in its service without doing anything unless moved by the grace of the Absolute, cognizes this eternal help rendered which gives rise to the undying love for the Absolute. The same love manifests itself as eternal bliss which is experienced by the self in the state of release. Thus the objection raised is removed and the object for the cognitive, emotive and conative aspects of the potency of the released self is expressed. From the expression that the supreme sees after making it to see it is easy to recognize that such a self whose action is nothing but the action of god remains unaffected by its *praradbha*. This is the state of *atita* where the self experiences the bliss of the Absolute.

When Shivaprakasham says, "arivu oli" (=like the cognition of the self) and the light (of the eye) the same meaning is to be attributed to the expression (which is pithy).

Even as fire does its function only in having its station in a particular thing, so god will do His function only taking His station in the self.

Since the aphorism begins with the comparison "like the self which makes the seeing eye to see", the relation between the self and the eye is obtained as advaita, the same relation is to be understood even in the expression of the Xth aphorism, which is as follows:

Even as the Lord is one with the self, when the self becomes etc.

The help rendered by the Absolute to the self is classified as the showing help and the seeing help. The showing help has been dealt with in the fifth Aphorism and its function is to enable the self to know the object. In the eleventh Aphorism the intention of the author is to enlighten on the seeing help, whose function is to make the self experience the object, to have ingress in it, identifying with it, being ignorant of all other things, including

the subject and its action for the nonce.

The showing help is also mentioned in this aphorism so that the subject may be easily understood. See the preposition of the first topic of this aphorism in order to know this truth.

Since the Sanskrit eleventh sutra also adds *ca* (=and) in the expression *Darsayitaca* (shows too), there is no question that it too speaks of seeing help:

In this aphorism, like the self which makes the seeing eye see, the Lord makes the self see and sees—is one topic. In unforgetting love the self reaches the feet of Hara—is another topic. So this aphorism issues into two topics.

#### TOPIC ONE

Of these, the first topic deals with the nature of advaita by enlightening about the help rendered by god when the self objectifies a thing refuting the schools of *Isvara avikara vadin* and others.

Proposition along the statement of reason:

Here, He too knows their objects:

for, these selves exist and know nothing of themselves without Him.

In the above expressions, He indicates the Primal Being. The force of “too” is that knowing not only belongs to the selves, as is evident, but also to the Primal Being. The object of the selves in the state of fetters is the world and that in the state of release is Shiva, the Bliss. So the Lord knows Himself too for the sake of the selves, having His locus in the selves themselves.

The statement of reason answers the contention that in the case of the analogy of the eye, the eye is insentient whereas the self is sentient, and supplies the missing valid sources for the seeing help of the Lord.

The statement means that even as the eye cannot function without light the selves depend on the Lord not only for their very existence but also for their action. The dependence of the selves on the Lord proves His showing help and their dependence on Him for their experience proves His seeing help. The inseparable togetherness of the Lord is necessary not only for the manifestation of the potencies of the selves but also for their functioning in objectifying their proper entities. The meaning of the statement of reason is as follows: “Even as the showing help of the Lord is evident from the dependence of the selves for their very existence, His seeing help is evident from their dependence on Him for their objectifying their objects. The existence of the selves means the manifestation of their potencies cognitive, emotive and conative.”

The meaning of this statement of reason is expounded in *Siddhiyar* 11, 7 as follows: In all places the selves will neither exist nor know their objects and function without the feet of the Lord: the Lord Himself will rightly enter the selves, will know all their functions and move them by pervading all places. These selves while making their appearance will not appear without Him. For these selves, even like the vowel (or A) stands necessary for all letters from A onwards the Lord will stand. So, where can we stand alone without the feet of Hara?

In this exposition, "In all places" means in both the states of fetters and release. The first part deals with the seeing help of the Lord in enabling the selves to objectify the objects. The part, which deals with the analogy of (A) and says that the selves will not appear without Him, is to deal with the nature of the existence of the selves. This should be understood as above, otherwise the repetition will become redundant. In *Shivaprakasham* 58, Saint Umapati, also indicated the necessity of light in both the places by the expressions, "the objects blended with the light of the lamp" and "the light of the lamp will blend".

Now, it may be argued that in the state of release there is nothing to be objectified by the self and so to say that in all places the objects of the selves will be known by the Primal Being, is incorrect. This argument proceeds, from ignorance: for, it is stated in *Unmai Vilakkam* 50, that it is the function of the self (in the state of release) to experience the pure Bliss; also, *Shivaprakasham* 87 speaks of the state of release in the words, "the reality which is experienced in inseparable union". Even in other places similar expression is used. So it is true that in the state of release the self experiences the Bliss which is Shiva, and even that isn't possible without the help of the Primal Being and it is true that the Primal Being knows that experiences of Bliss, having His focus on that self. It is, because with this intention in view, that some Agamas say that even the Primal Being experiences His Bliss Himself. Here the intention behind the wording experience is to know only.

Shivadvaitins and others do not know this intention and will assert that even the Primal Being will experience His Bliss Himself. The meaning of the expression, experience is only "to know with ingress" (*azhundi arital*) to know the object identifying with it. We have shown above that nature belongs to the self above and not to the Primal Being. The Primal Being is of the nature of Bliss Itself and He need not experience that Bliss newly. Also all the functions of the Primal Being are performed for the sake of the selves and this was told previously, so it is to be understood that their school is a false pretension.

Now the following objection arises: If god has the showing help alone, He can be said to be free from any change like the attraction of the iron in the mere presence of the magnet. But if god has the seeing help also, then we suppose that He is together with the self and sees the object. So He should certainly be fettered and subject to change even like the self. To answer this contention, the following illustrative verse is given by the author:—

1 (a). Because the self perceives the objects of the five senses with ingress, identifying itself with them, it does not perceive all at once, but does perceive them one by one. But He, the unchanging one, perceives all things simultaneously.

#### Meaning of 1(a):

It is the nature of the self to perceive its objects of identifying itself with them. So it perceives them one by one and not all at once. The Primal Being is ever the same without variableness and knows the perceptions of all the selves all at once. So He should not be considered to undergo change simply because He knows the objects through the selves.

The following illustrative verse gives the reason why the Primal Being enables the attained to be free from the effects of their *prarabdha*, while making others suffer from its effects.

This is the cause for relevance given in *Padiam*. But in the small commentary the same commentator gives another cause for the relevance. The import of this topic is that god knows what the self experiences, which when applied to the freed state involves the logical fallacy of *Atmasraya*, (dependence on the same self).

1 (b). The Primal Being has the splendour of giving (bliss-ful) experience to those that abide in oneness with Him and conceive as His feet whatever happens to them. He is one with the self and does not leave it. Will He not know, being together with the experience, what he thinks?

#### Meaning:

God is inseparable with the self: He is also known to be experienced as Bliss by the realized selves, when they identify with Him and consider all the happenings of the world as Bliss or the feet of God. So it is established that He knows the intention of the selves when they begin to reap the fruits of their *prarabdha*.

## The Story of Harishchandra

VIRAKAVIRAYAR

VIRAKAVIRAYAR (Virakavirāyar, 18th century) belonged to Nallur in Ramanathapuram District. It is said that the author descended from a family of goldsmiths and worshipped Kali. He wrote *Arichantira Puranam* (Aricandrapurāṇam) and had his *arangetram* or debut before a learned audience in the Vishnu Temple at Tiruppullani in 1524. This long poem bespeaks the glorious life of King Harishchandra who sacrificed his life for the cause of truth.

The excerpt given here depicts Chandramati, the queen, going in search of her son, lamenting over him, trying to cremate his body.

1

Persuaded by the words of the woman  
that wore a garland on her lovely tresses,  
The Brahmin assenting said: "Manifold are  
the chores; if you can return before day-break,  
O blue-eyed woman, you can go."  
Even as he spake thus, she moved out,  
leaving behind her the well-guarded city.

2

"O son of this sinner !" she would cry agonized;  
Her soft head getting hit, she would fall down;  
She would rise up and again fall down, bewildered;  
She would wail piteously whilst tears  
cascaded from her eyes of blue lily.  
Paralysed by fear and goaded by intense yearning,  
She moved about—a bewildered body  
in quest of its life.

3

Her footprints were everywhere and these  
held her tears aplenty;  
Brambles and briars a-bruising, she waded,  
and her footprints were wet with blood.  
Strands of her hair stuck into the branches  
and dangled from them;

The wood was littered with the pieces  
 of garment torn from her;  
 She pursued her quest through plant bush—  
 by none ever identified.

## 4

She ran amain, her heart totally thawed;  
 she wilted with a singing body;  
 She came to the pile of firewood heaped  
 under a banyan tree; her quest continued;  
 She found her son amidst a throng of vultures,  
 ghouls, jackals and pyknic goblins.

## 5

Down she fell wailing aloud, frightening  
 vultures and all else too, away;  
 Love for her infant spiralled up and up;  
 Lifting him up tenderly with her lotus-hands  
 She laid him—beautiful as Muruka—, on her lap,  
 Open her lips and so bewailed  
 that the celestials grieved—all 'wilderred.

## 6

"O son, you endured the chill of cold,  
 the heat of sun and the grief of hunger;  
 These you survived, Alas, you lie dead  
 by the bite of a cruel-eyed serpent !  
 I know not of so gross a sin by me committed  
 to deserve this plight !  
 O son that fell down and rolled to death  
 by a venomous snake ! you lie low in a lone place !  
 Henceforth who indeed will our prop be !  
 How will my lord and I survive at all !

## 7

"No drum proclaims your death; you lie dead amidst plants  
 that flutter by the wind raised by  
 the shaking wings of vultures perching in rows.

Is this the fate-ordained for you ?  
 Our king is he who wields a sharp spear;  
 he gave all the uberous realm of Kosala  
 as a gift when Vishwamitra beseeched him.  
 Is this the kismet for you, the son of such a king !

8

"My tears pour down torrential like a cloud-burst !  
 Blood oozes out of my fleshless body;  
 Grown languid, I wither like leaves  
 fried over a raging fire.  
 Alone, all alone, I languish cursing my fate.  
 Yet, you ask me not: 'What ails you, mother ?'  
 Does this become you, O my son !

9

"A day shall come  
 when your father—,  
 A great king of righteous reign and truth,  
 Excellent, competent, potent, triumphant,  
 Matched with the grace and might  
 Of a raging tusker—,  
 Will come and manumit us.  
 In delight great and love boundless,  
 He would call up and ask;  
 "Where is my son, my love ?"  
 O one whose visage is bright like a lout,  
 How will I answer and with what words?

10

"Nipped dead you lie in this wild,  
 Of a snake-bite, O son,  
 Though your father had given away  
 The lush, green and well-watered Kosala,  
 The dynastic right to rule a nation  
 Has not left you totally.  
 For, after my father,  
 That Kanoj ever ticking with  
 The ploughshare and noise of tilth,  
 Who else could fitly rule  
 Than you ? Lo, you are gone !



## 11

"Never did we fail to observe  
 Any of the thirty-two acts  
 of virtue defined by the learned greats.  
 Never did we slight the poor, the meek  
 And spoke ill of them.  
 Never did we tax more  
 Than the sixth of the income,  
 From our people;  
 Never did we wish an epsilon more !  
 Neither did we prevaricate nor equivocate.  
 Never did we disregard the counsel of the renunciants.  
 We did all good and were good.  
 Then, why should this befall us,?

## 12

"Never have we plied an army to lay waste  
     a land poised in the Vedic way of life;  
 Never have we assigned a place in the cabinet  
     to one utterly unversed in the Vedas;  
 Never have we suffered any of our citizens  
     to commit crimes and sins;  
 O Lord, God, the Conferrer of the fruit of tapas !  
     Is this the fate with which you have bound us !

## 13

"Like nimbus and the pentad of wondrously  
     generous trees, your hand poured munificence;  
 Broad and mighty was your chest; the lustre  
     of your visage glowed the brighter every day;  
 Your tuft of hair was a joy to behold.  
 Lo, you lie low, dead  
     and cold ! My sinner's eyes  
     behold this and yet my life abides in my body.  
 O son, neither my heart nor my matrix  
     could contain my misery.

## 14

"Like evil wrought by him of a faith  
     to another of a different faith,

Like the wrong imagined against us  
 by the merciless and wicked Kausika Muni,  
 You have wronged us, O serpent whose heart  
 harbours vile deception and whose fangs  
 are full of thanatophidian hatred.  
 You have killed in utter stealth my son—  
 a young, ichorous tusker.  
 Have I ever grieved you by any act of mine  
 that you should turn so hostile against me ?

15

“O comely one that used to play on my consort’s  
 beauteous chest ! O child, you have  
 predeceased us to get gutted with raging fire !  
 I grieve bewildered in this dense jungle  
 where dholes roam in packs.  
 You speak not to me saying; ‘Mother, do not grieve’.  
 Does this square with your wisdom ?

16

“Son of that king who ever adores Shiva—  
 never-born and eternal !  
 Do you think thus: “I died by the snake  
 of insatiate and cruel fangs, the one  
 that yet wears a precious jewel in its crest;  
 I’ll have sibship none with her—  
 the inveterate sinner that survives me.”  
 Is this the reason why you open not your ruddy lips  
 of fruitage to utter even a word ?  
 Is this why you decline to behold me ?

17

“Ha, I haven’t died with my son—the wielder  
 of a sharp and triumphant spear  
 in his flowery hand;  
 My consort that munificently gave away  
 his uberous realm to the Muni, will not  
 henceforth cast his look on me at all.  
 Does it become me to wallow on earth  
 like the tree struck with lightning ?  
 O Yama, it is extremely unjust of you  
 not to have simultaneously ended my life !”

## 18

Thus she grieved and her thought ran thus:

"If I die with him, there will be none  
to cremate his body; the one that bought me  
as his slave is cruel-hearted;  
his wife excels him in cruelty;  
the wrathful pair will fall foul on me  
if I return not before day-break.  
I'll cremate him and then go back."

Lifting her son onto her beauteous shoulders,  
Chandramati—the daughter of Matitayan—,  
toddled her way to the crematory.

## 19

Past the wild burial-mounds she moved on  
Enduring all hardship:  
For her locks and robes  
Were by clumps of furze  
Bullied and torn; thorny shrubs pricked her;  
Dholes on sides tried to seize and drag her;  
Ghosts in packs followed her demanding that she should  
drop the cadaver;  
Vultures flew at her amain;  
Jackals leapt at her from every side.  
Thus, even thus, she crossed the thorny graveyards  
and arrived at the crematorium.

## 20

By the din raised by them that burn the corpses,  
the loud noise of the splitting of crania,  
the foul stench of charring fat  
The spiralling of the fire from many a pyre,  
the joyous roar of the dancing ghouls,  
the abundant spattering of the sparks of fire,  
the smoke that streamed,  
and the raucous barking of the fighting dogs  
she, whose mien is like that of a peafowl's,  
conned her way and raught the crematory.

21

She beheld the burning-ghat; she placed  
 her son on the ground and invoked the gods  
 to guard his body.  
 She scurried on all sides and secured  
 bits of half-burnt firewood.  
 There she went where corpses were burning;  
 from a pyre she pulled out a fire-brand,  
 came back running and raised a fire  
 on the firewood-pile.  
 Then on the pyre raging with fire  
 she placed her son.  
 As the fire blazed up, the king beheld it.

22

He knew not that the prince died  
 of snake-bite; he raged in ire;  
 "Who, in this night, is cremating a corpse ?  
 This I should find out."  
 Thus thinking, up he rose and ran towards her.  
 "O wretched woman addle-brained !  
 Without paying me that fee due, you, all alone,  
 in this moist night, have brought a corpse  
 and are burning it furtively.  
 Is this proper on your part ?"  
 This said, he kicked his own scion away.

*Arichantira Puranam*, 18th century

Tr. by S. A. Sankaranarayanan

## Hymns to Tiruchendur Murukan

### PAKALIKKUTTAR

PAKALIKKUTTAR (Pakalikkūttar, 18th century) belonged to the Vaishnava sect. His native place is a village in the far south of Tamil Nadu. He suffered from intensive abdominal pain during his younger years. Unable to endure the sufferings, Pakalikkuttar appealed to Lord Subramanya of Tiruchentur and sang the *Pillaitamil* poem. As a result he was relieved of the pain.

The excerpt given here is from *Tiruchentur Pillaitamil*. *Pillaitamil* is a most productive genre in Tamil, practised widely even today. In this genre, the Lord is praised assuming that he or she is a child. Usually it is divided into ten sections, namely (1) *Kappu* (praying the God to guard the child), (2) *Senkeerai* (teach-

ing the child), (3) *Tal* (the lullaby), (4) *Muttam* (the song of kisses to the child), (5) *Sappani* (the song of clapping the hands), (6) *Varukai* (praising the tender walk of the child), (7) *Ampuli* (appealing to the moon to come down and appease the child), (8) *Chitril* (about the beauty of the sand-house made by the child), (9) *Siruparai* (of beating the kettle-down), (10) *Siruther* (of driving the toy-cart).

## 1

## The Infant Stage

O Nephew of Lord Krishna,  
 Who the ocean with the serpent churned,  
 And the Govardhan Hill as an umbrella held aloft,  
 Shielding the cows from the monsoon rains  
 Mightily pouring down;  
 And merry music made with the bamboo flute,  
 On the banks of the Yamuna babbling loud;  
 Accompanying the herd of cows!  
 O Handsome one, who is Deivayanai's spouse !

O Lord of Tiruchentur that has ponds,  
 At which young buffaloes having tender calves,  
 Shower ambrosial milk from udders bursting full,  
 And the she-swans suck sweet milk alone from the water !  
 To you I sing a lullaby sweet !

## 2

## The Playsome Stage

Holder of the Spear ! Lord of Tiruchentur !  
 You make the full-moon shine like a perfect pearl,  
 Over the brooks of the backwaters,  
 And bowers on the briny shore,  
 Full of black lilies and buzzing bees.  
 O Warrior bold, who inflict fell wounds  
 On the foes in the battlefield !  
 Keeping motionless your vigorous and valorous shoulders  
 That are more beautiful than your epaulettes ornate,  
 Embellished with precious gems none of rare renown !

Keeping still your diamond ear-rings rotund,  
Dazzling brighter than the rays of the radiant sun !  
Without letting drops of perspiration  
Erase the triple streaks of sacred ash,  
On your forehead, beautiful beyond words,  
In a face, cool and sweet !

Without letting the fingers of your lotus-hands redden,  
Without letting the bracelets that adorn your beautiful hands tinkle,  
Your hands be pleased to clap and grant you Grace !

3

The Endearment Stage

The waves of the roaring seas,  
Full with the right-turned shells,  
Do toss them up;  
Knocked hard about and washed ashore,  
On the stretches of white sand,  
They bring forth pearls that come scattering down,  
And they do have a price !

The turbulent elephant in heat, hefty as a hill,  
Has tusks curved like a half-moon;  
To pearls they give rise,  
And they do have a price !  
The strong showers from the sable clouds,  
Drops of dewy pearls let fall,  
And they do have a price !

But O Lord Muruka !  
Priceless are the kisses  
Your mouth, cherry-lipped,  
Is pleased to give !  
So do give a kiss !

O Lord of Tiruchentur,  
By the sea of pearls surrounded,  
Do give a kiss !

4

The Moon-Friendly Stage

O Moon ! By your phases, many You do appear,  
Waxing-full day by day !

But mature this young One grows,  
 By the skill of knowledge, heard and imbibed!  
 A full-moon though,  
 By your blots deemed blemishful you are !  
 But of sole thought is this young one,  
 Valli, the tribal belle to win !  
 Surrounded you are by stars countless !  
 But around Lord Muruka are the gracious throng  
 Of Lord Shiva's retainers !  
 Only the meagre ambrosia you have, O Moon !  
 But ever has Lord Muruka.  
 The eternal elixir of the gifted tongue !  
 You have, O Moon,  
 The enmity of the dire dragons, Rahu, and Ketu !  
 But this Young One has the peacock  
 That pecks to pieces the deadly serpent  
 That poison spews forth !  
 So, O Moon ! Do come hither,  
 To play with the Lord of the Spear !

Lord of Tiruchentur,  
 By the deep sea surrounded !  
 With this Young One do come to play, O Moon !  
 He comes adorned with the hooded-snake,  
 Gracefully riding the peacock's back !

## 5

## The Drum-Tapping Stage

Duryodhan, the leader of the Kaurav kings  
 Of the triumphant snake-pennant,  
 Did with the Pandavas fiercely fight,  
 By his hundred brothers backed,  
 And a body of eighteen warriors equally bold !  
 O Nephew of Lord Vishnu,  
 Who the Chariot of Arjun drove  
 And by the Pandavas stood steadfast  
 And to Arjun victory brought,  
 Vanquishing the kings of various ranks  
 In Duryodhan's array !  
 And who the Seven Worlds did swallow and spit out  
 And the right-turned conch trumpet,  
 With his pretty mouth !

O Lord Muruka !  
 Destroyer of the alien demi-gods,  
 With whom you warred on earth !  
 Do be pleased to tap the drums !

6

The Little Play-House Stage

O Lord Muruka !  
 With a cluster of pearl-like conchs  
 Which come crowding closely together  
 In the new floods that glow like gold,  
 A tiny little play-house,  
 We have built near the banks.  
 Making a right-turned conch a vessel,

We have filled it with rich honey,  
 From the lotus flowers flourishing aplenty,  
 In the fresh-watered-fields.  
 Immersing the cane-rice pearly white,  
 Cupfuls we have playfully cooked,  
 And curry made from fragrant flowers many !  
 May You look upon our endeavour with grace!

O Young Lord Muruka !  
 Do not, we entreat you,  
 Trample on this tiny little play-house we have built,  
 With your famed foot you laid  
 On the head of Indra,  
 Who rode Iravatam, the elephant !

O Lord of Tiruchentur  
 That is by pearly-waves embraced,  
 This tiny little play-house do not raze !

*Tiruchentur Pillaitamil*, 18th century

Tr. by R. Ganapathy

The Butter of Salvation

TANTAVARAYAR

TANTAVARAYAR (Tāndavarāyar, 18th century) was an ascetic, well-versed in Shaiva-Siddhanta philosophy. His *Kaivalya Navanitam* is a philosophical work in two chapters, containing 293 stanzas. This is in dialogue form. The guru and his disciple discuss the concepts of *Pati*, *Pasu*, and *Pasam*.



You said, "By the rule of revelation you ought to know the only Brahma !" and, "It is beyond the reach of description". (You said moreover,) "Within your heart you ought to perceive it", and , "That being, that shineth forth in its own light, is beyond the reach of our miserable spirit." These two perplexing doubts sprang up within me. O master, graciously pull them out !

(6)

The master answered: Neither through the three other rules (of knowledge) the (supreme) being can be determined. It is neither object, nor something caused, nor has it a match (and so it cannot be apprehended either in the way of "perception, or of inference, or of analogy") therefore (every positive definition) would be a fault. As there is no assemblage of distinctive attributes (in that supreme being), it is beyond the reach of description. This truth you will now clearly see.

(7)

The same Vedas which declare; "The (supreme) being is beyond the reach of words", show this very being through examination of their own words. Is it not ? "Now which of both declarations is then the true one ?" To this your question, answer: Both; sacred writ never tell lies. Only hear me !

(8)

The woman when with regard to those who were not her lovers; said: "That is not he, that isn't he !" bashfully became mute, when they questioned her about the real one. In a similar manner holy writ first pushes back, declaring: "This is not (Brahma); this is not (Brahma) !" but then what remains is Brahma, and about this it speaks, although not speaking.

(9)

You will now understand what I have said to remove the first doubt. Hear at present my reply in order to remove also the second one. The mind is the king of the senses; its thoughts, in the shape of *Manas* and of *Buddi*, play without and within.

(10)

Resembling your face, another face is seen in the mirror; so the reflex of the absolute spirit appears, like spirit, in the human intellect. By its way, the spotless mental function always proceeds. O my good virtuous son ! this, of course, they call "intelligence".

(11)

Molten copper may assume various shapes; thus the mental perceptions are changed into the (respective) corporeal objects. The reflex (of the absolute spirit), being endowed with wonderful power, illumines them all. Things in darkness cannot be seen without both light and eye.

(12)

Dark objects must be seen through the assistance of the light and the eye; but to see the bright sun, the eye is sufficient. In a similar manner you want mental intellect as well as mental faculty, to see this extending universe; but to those, who are looking for the absolute being, the sole intellect is sufficient. (13)

That modification, in which intellect and faculty combine, is called *Manas*. Now as far as the intellect, rising within the mind, is required (for recognizing the absolute being), this is within the reach of the *Manas*. But it cannot be reached by the *Manas* in the shape of busy faculty; do you not see ? Thus you ought to take it, and letting go every doubt, clear up within yourself. (14)

O supreme, never-deceiving teacher ! All you have explained unto me I understand. Hear only one word. Spirit, of course, is that which, void of fluctuation, in undivided plenitude, is to assume the shape of That (i.e. Brahma). But alas ! Samadhi itself (the only means for accomplishing this) is wavering like a swing. How then may this mind, suddenly rising in the shape of many worlds, attain to its own nature, and resting unshaken within the (supreme) being, obtain the state of a lamp sheltered from every blast. O master, graciously tell me ! (15)

The Gunas of the reflecting *Manas* are three. As soon as, among these three, one rises with prevailing power, the two others hide themselves. When the bountiful *Sattva-Guna* is uppermost, divine perfection results. Where the *Rajo-Guna* preponderates, there a prepondancy towards the body, world, and (worldly) science ensues. But demoniac perfection is brought about whenever the *Tamo-Guna* prevails, dear son ! (16)

The *Manas* is essentially *Sattva*; the two other Gunas accede only in the way of accident. Whenever you try to remove them, they will yield. If you do not abandon the good path leading to "Self", the *Tamo-Guna* as well as the *Rajo-Guna* must perish. Then all change and motion will come to an end, and the *Manas* resembles the spotless unchangeable ether. Thus it will fare with your mind. Uniting to that Brahma, it obtains a firm footing in the Samadhi, which is free from difference (doubt and error). (17)

When before a spotless mirror you place another of the same kind it will participate in its brilliant nature, and every difference between both will disappear. In a similar way the mind clears up, that has attained to unity with the Brahma, which, immeasurably pervading every thing, is essence, spirit, and bliss. Now when you are changed into this nature, where is the world, and where is that fluctuation ? (18)

If uniting to the Brahma, the Manas goes down, wherewith will the life-emancipated wise, as long as they exist, enjoy and suffer the dealings of rewarding destiny (*Prarabdha*); the *Prarabdha* will never cease, unless you enjoy (or suffer) it. Now if this is the case, the Manas itself is gone, and wherever the Manas perishes, there is no sensation. Should it however appear, then you cannot speak of life-emancipation. Now explain this well unto me, my master, to the end that this confusion may clear away." (19)

They distinguish a double destruction of the Manas: one refers to the own shape (*Svarupa nasa*) and the other refers to the absence of any shape whatever (*Arupa nasa*). The one of these two (*Svarupa-nasa*) belongs to the life-emancipated wise, who (knowing all) never asks, whereas the other is found among those who have attained to the emancipation from body, my son ! When the Manas remains in the shape of Sattva, its proper nature, while the Rajo-Guna and the Tamo-Guna perish, then this is the destruction that refers to the own (innermost) shape. But when, at the dissolution of the *Sukshma-Sharira*, the Sattva-Guna too dissolves, then this is the destruction that refers to the absence of any shape whatever. (20)

The pure Sattva-Guna is the true nature (in the life-emancipated wise). When dust (Rajo-Guna) and darkness (Tamo-Guna) perish, then even the word "Manas" will perish. As to the present, (the life-emancipated wise) submit to those enjoyments (and sufferings) which may have happened; when they think of what will come, or what has gone, they neither rejoice, nor grieve. Abandoning that egotism which declares: "I am the actor !" and as one who does not act at all, (quietly) looking at the function of the faculties, senses, and organs as well as at the three states, you may become a life-emancipated one, and at the same time submit to enjoying (or suffering) the *Prarabdha*. There is no hindrance whatever. Recognizing the truth of this, you ought to free yourself of your doubt. (21)

"If you speak of *Samadhi*, while (worldly) occupation is going on, such *Samadhi*, of course, cannot be free from difference. Or does not the Manas stray about ? If it strays about, that Samadhi will slip down; will it not ?" With regard to this your question I propose the following example. The heart of that woman who has recently embraced her paramour, will even while she is performing the trouble-some business of the household, continually dwell on the pleasure she enjoyed, when embracing her lover. (22)

"If the life-emancipated one who, no longer identifying himself with his body, and being free from action and devoid of Giva, has cleared up into

Brahma, is said to enjoy (or suffer), he must be an actor. Or is there any such thing possible for one, free from every action ? You who have graciously removed my sorrows, my master ! You ought to remove also this doubt." To this your request I answer: Hear me explain the greatness of those three kinds of people, who are called: "Great-actors, great-enjoyers, and great-forsakers." (23)

As the iron moves before the magnet-mountain, free from acting as well as from causing to act, the material world is busy. Now I will show you the all-pervading great-actor. It is he who stands unshaken in the conviction: "I am, like the sun, a mere spectator both to the busy activity in the shape of the multiform organs joined to the body, as to the *Samadhi* joining the supreme essence by the conversion of the (before-mentioned mental) activity into the (real) self. (24)

The great-enjoyer is he who, not selecting his food with regard to the superior or inferior qualities of the "six flavours", to their purity or impurity, to their conduciveness or noxiousness, patiently consumes anything; just as the fire in the jungle eats up whatever lies in its way. But the great-forsaker is that man whose mind, like a crystal, remains unsullied in all concerns, be they great or little, his own or strange, good or evil. Now, those who are possessed of this threefold continence, are the really emancipated. (25)

"How can one say, that (the life-emancipated one) has done all he had to do, when he is living after the manner of that fate which, through the body, distributes the *Prarabdha* and when he, for the benefit of those who seek salvation in works, is engaged in all occupations that may happen. O you who have removed my sad sorrow, you ought properly to explain this unto me." (26)

The occupations of men are of three kinds. Those who, while under the sway of ignorance, and being possessed of lust, avarice, and pride, exert themselves on behalf of this and the other world. Those who longingly say: "We must attain to emancipation !" are engaged in the pursuit of every study. But whenever you obtain perfection, what is the advantage to be derived from the great business of learning ? (27)

"O head-jewel of teacher, vouchsafe to hear me ! What you have explained unto me, is quite consistent. Those who have got rid both of this world and the other one, are such who will devote themselves to the study of true wisdom; is it not so ? Or should they who have escaped from the turbulent

pursuits (of the world), ever fix again this desire on them ? No, never ! But is not hearing, reflecting, and the like required to the end, that the mind may obtain a firm footing ?" (28)

My glorious son, hear me ! To such who are in "ignorance" about the true nature of things, hearing (the lectures of a teacher) is quite a duty. Some who are in "doubt", ought to give themselves up to reflecting, by which the wavering (of the mind) is removed. Those at last who are incessantly tormented by the devil of "contrariety", will have recourse to constant meditation. But is there any thing wanting to people who have assumed the shape of ether, who are essential knowledge, and enjoy full perfection ? (29)

O master, graciously hear me ! Are philosophers indeed allowed to express themselves like fools: "I did, I saw, I ate, I went ?" You said that, with regard to them, all unreal "contrarieties" (*Viparita*) are gone. Now a real change of *Brahma*, who is absolute truth, cannot be acknowledged in such (occurrences of life). (30)

*Kaivalya Navanitam*, 18th century

Tr. by Charles Graul

## Hymns to the Lord of All

### TAYUMANAVAR

TAYUMANAVAR (*Tāyumānavar*, 18th century) was born in Vedaranyam. After his father's death, Queen Meenakshi invited Tayumanavar to be the accountant in the palace. Tayumanavar decided to leave the palace because of the queen's inducement to have him as her partner in love. At his brother's request he married a girl, but his wife died at the birth of their first child. Tayumanavar renounced the life of a householder and became a religious ascetic.

This is a selection of 50 hymns out of 389 forming the section called *Parapara Kanni*, the most popularly used of Tayumanavar's psalms. Each hymn consists of two lines, the second ending with the address "Paraparamey" (here rendered as "Lord of All") which gives the title to the whole collection.

Of bliss the beauteous mountain  
In heaven of grace Thou art  
Who see Thee shall have never  
In births and re-births part;  
Lord of all.

(1)

O Rain of grace, all giving,  
 Foreseeing all my thought,  
 Lo: Thou hast come— Thy coming  
 Fulfilment's sprouts hath brought,  
 Lord of all. (2)

The cry of all the creeds is,  
 "The Lord, Our God, who knows?"  
 All-Soul whose love in rivers  
 Of bliss unbounded flows,  
 Lord of all. (3)

Thou art the flame of glory  
 In hearts silent to Thee  
 And of the soul's unending  
 Bliss Thou the boundless sea,  
 Lord of all. (4)

Thou everywhere abidest,  
 The goal of all Thou art.  
 Now sweet, O honey-welling,  
 Art Thou within my heart,  
 Lord of all. (5)

O Pearl of pearls, most precious,  
 O burning Gold, most bright,  
 O Wisdom, Understanding,  
 My inmost being's Light,  
 Lord of all. (6)

Thou art on all sides Vastness  
 That I should see Thee so  
 Man unto me becamest,  
 Speakest the word: I know,  
 Lord of all. (7)

O love, at full-tide flowing  
 Fulfillest love in me,  
 O God, O Bliss unbounded  
 My soul's defence to be  
 Lord of all. (8)

The treasure-chest of Silence  
The heaven within it hideth,  
Thou art the jewelled glory  
That in its heart abideth,  
Lord of all. (9)

The good in knowledge gladdened  
Unceasing praises roll  
To Thee whose glory burneth  
Bright in Vedanta's goal,  
Lord of all. (10)

In heaven Thy feet, fair lotus,  
Thy saints adoring see,  
To them Thou comest, Glory,  
Siddhanta's God to be,  
Lord of all. (11)

To boast that by book-learning  
Thy footsteps, I have known,  
'Tis wrong, O God, vain-glory  
With contrite heart I own,  
Lord of all. (12)

O God, in bodies many  
Thou knowest I was born,  
Thou knowest all my sorrows,  
The agonies agone,  
Lord of all. (13)

The life of all that liveth  
As my own life to love,  
Or great or small unhearing,  
Grant me grace from above,  
Lord of all. (14)

Life unto all that liveth  
O, all-where, Lord Thou art  
Life unto all Thou givest  
All life is of Thee part,  
Lord of all. (15)

Words of my mouth are prayers,  
 I've found them so to be,  
 And my heart's meditations  
 Acceptable to Thee.  
 Lord of all. (16)

God, Thou art with me ever,  
 Thou never leavest me,  
 And in my mind Thou dwellest,  
 Indwelling, makest Thee  
 Lord of all. (17)

Thyself for me thou gavest;  
 Giving, Thou madest me  
 Thine, by Thy grace prevenient  
 What is the gain to Thee,  
 Lord of all ? (18)

Thou, freeing me from falseness,  
 Has stillness bidden me,  
 Sufficient is that silence,  
 Bliss of the soul to be,  
 Lord of all. (19)

O Teacher, mute and mystic,  
 All Thine Thou madest me,  
 Sufficient is that conquest  
 Bliss of the soul to be,  
 Lord of all. (20)

Thine am I now, once foolish,  
 Of understanding none,  
 What reward can I render  
 For favours to me done,  
 Lord of all ? (21)

'Tis gladness makes the godly,  
 With melody and glee  
 In dancing and in singing,  
 Rejoice, in seeking Thee.  
 Lord of all. (22)



They are like little children,  
The simple, the unsound,  
In all they do. Thy servants  
Who wisdom's goal have found,  
Lord of all. (23)

With Thee, as salt in water  
Thy saints in converse are  
Words fail that bliss in telling  
All bliss surpassing far,  
Lord of all. (24)

To all in Shiva silence  
Clear-willed and pure of mind,  
Thy saints, I am their servant,  
Myself in bondage blind,  
Lord of all. (25)

To those who love all others  
As their own selves, and live  
Lives led of grace, Thy servants,  
I willing service give,  
Lord of all. (26)

O fit me for the service  
Of all who truly love  
And serve Thee, so shall I be  
Fittest for bliss above,  
Lord of all. (27)

The stages of devotion,  
The favoured, the four-fold,  
Are bud, and blossom fruitage  
Green and then ripest gold,  
Lord of all. (28)

Of charity, almsgiving  
And prayer, penance, pain,  
Deeds must they do who saving  
Knowledge here seek to gain,  
Lord of all. (29)

Of all the deed-made many  
 Embodiments on earth,  
 Say why the best I think is  
 The body of this birth,  
 Lord of all. (30)

This body with lies laden,  
 Deceitful through and through,  
 By merely being called so  
 Can never be the true,  
 Lord of all. (31)

Fleeting as lightning-flashes,  
 This body of a day  
 To trust it, Thee forgetting,  
 Is not to me the way,  
 Lord of all. (32)

Why in this water-bubble,  
 This unabiding clay,  
 Should there be all this suffering,  
 And all this sorrow, say,  
 Lord of all. (33)

Why do men of no knowledge  
 For dying bodies weep ?  
 Why dread if one but knoweth  
 The happenings in sleep,  
 Lord of all ? (34)

This bodiment dissolving,  
 What other frame is there ?  
 What burden for the bearing ?  
 What follows, when and where,  
 Lord of all ? (35)

This load of limbs skin-covered,  
 This form, this living thing,  
 With pride assumed, yet burden,  
 Whence came it, to being,  
 Lord of all ? (36)

The saints, the truly holy,  
Unlonging for the lust  
Of body, know in slumber  
It seems a corpse for dust,  
Lord of all. (37)

Long I've laboured, breathless,  
The breath of life to hold  
Within this food-bag, body,  
Bearer of ills of old,  
Lord of all. (38)

There was day Thou tookest  
Goods, body, being, three  
Thy booty, Now, let nothing  
Be lacking unto me,  
Lord of all. (39)

O Bliss thou bounteous camest  
To me of Thine own will,  
Seeking me for my gladdenings  
Protecting me from ill,  
Lord of all. (40)

Wouldst Thou accept a garland  
Woven of words for Thee,  
Or from the fields fair flowers,  
An offering from me,  
Lord of all ? (41)

Always Thy praises singing,  
Thy Grace I celebrate,  
To me are thoughts none other:  
The rest thy will, my fate,  
Lord of all. (42)

Through self that 'I', 'I', crieth  
Though thou depart from me,  
Yet I from Thee will never,  
Never asundered be,  
Lord of all. (43)

To Thee I've come for refuge,  
 O cast me not away  
 That thou shouldst not give shelter  
 The reason to me say,  
 Lord of all. (44)

Thou, with all seeing blended,  
 Art of all eyes the light  
 The eyes of all things living  
 In Thine Eye-light are bright,  
 Lord of all. (45)

If Thou to me, Beloved,  
 Art dearest, I should be  
 To Thee Thine own beloved,  
 As dear as Thou to me,  
 Lord of all. (46)

Intemperance, list, murder,  
 Theft, anger, and ill-will  
 Must die in him whose longings  
 Are for Thy holy hill,  
 Lord of all. (47)

Attachment and illusion  
 From me had passed away  
 And lo: I saw in vision  
 Thy glory bright as day,  
 Lord of all. (48)

Illusion gone, in vision  
 O God, I saw, that day,  
 Thy hand in mercy wiping  
 My tears from me away,  
 Lord of all. (49)

Where can I from Thy presence  
 Depart, parted from Thee,  
 O God who all-where fillest  
 With bliss abundantly,  
 Lord of all. (50)

## The Musical Drama on Rama

ARUNACHALA KAVIRAYAR

ARUNACHALA KAVIRAYAR (Arunācala Kavirāyar, 1712-1779) was a scholar in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. He lived in the sacred town of Sirkali in Tanjavur District. He was under the tutelage of Ambalavana Kavirayar of Dharmapuram Adheenam. It is said that he wrote *Rama Natakam* (Rāma Nāṭakam) at the request of his disciples Kothandarama Aiyar and Venkatarama Aiyar.

*Rama Nataka Kirtanai* is in the form of songs and verses using simple language and well-chosen Karnatic tunes. The work is long and contains 258 musical songs and 278 other verses. The poet is considered to be one among the Elder Trinity of Karnatic music and a predecessor to Saint Tyagaraja.

A few episodes from the musical drama are given here.

### 1

#### The Meeting of Rama and Sita

In Kampa Ramayana, Rama meets Sita and falls in love, even before his lifting of the Shiva Dhanush in Janaka's court. This episode is adapted from Kampan by Arunachala Kavirayar. Rama is bewitched by the sight of Sita standing on the terrace of her palace.

Who is this damsel  
And what is her name ?  
I know not.  
In this beautiful city of Mithila  
Where the clouds roam around the towers  
She appears before me  
On the balcony of her palace.  
Who is this damsel ?  
Well-chiselled are her breasts  
She resembles the lady of the lotus  
By her poise and serenity  
Surrounded by waiting maidens  
She stands.  
Who is this damsel ?  
Luck I have to cherish this sight  
All my good fortune have come to fruition.  
Charming eyes and nose she has.  
Even ladies thirst to see her

Again and again  
 Who is this damsel ?  
 The flowery face  
 Made of moon-beams  
 Glances at me now and then  
 She seems to be a continuous link  
 from ages past  
 Yet she is a feast of the present  
 Who is this damsel ?  
 And what is her name ?  
 I know not.

2

Rama and Akalya

Vishvamisra takes Rama and Lakshmana to Mithila, after the successful completion of the Yagna. During their journey, in the midst of the woods, a cursed rock is transformed into a woman, at the touch of Rama's feet. Vishvamisra introduces to Rama the woman Akalya as the wife of Gautama.

O Ram !  
 She is the wife of Gautama.  
 Nay, she is the life-spark of Gautama.  
 It happened years ago.  
 The hidden desire in the  
 heart of Indra  
 induced him to seduce her,  
 It happened years ago.  
 Sensing that it is too early  
 To take bath in the Ganga  
 The sage returned  
 only to curse her and  
 she turned into a hardened rock.

She is the wife of Gautama  
 Nay, she is the life-spark of Gautama.  
 The pained sage saw the culprit.  
 Rage uncontrolled surged ahead  
 And he cursed Indra,  
 From the crowned head to foot  
 Indra thus got a thousand eyes.

O Ram !  
 I do not know of the good  
 That comes to the wise  
 Who chant your name,  
 But I do know now  
 That a particle of dust  
 from your foot  
 Can create a woman  
 Out of a hardened rock,  
 for I have seen this happen  
 in this wild forest

She is the wife of Gautama.  
 Nay, she is the life-spark  
 of Gautama.

## 3

## Parashuram Swallows his Pride

Rama was returning to Ayodhya after his marriage with Sita, when Parashuram accosts him on the way. Brandishing a bow in his hand, he challenges Rama to bend the bow he has brought. The meeting of the two great avatars is dramatized with wit and sarcasm.

PARASHURAM	:	You seem to be a king And I bless you, Raghuram !.
RAMA	:	You look like a Brahmin sage And I pay obeisance, Parashuram !
PARASHURAM	:	Is it right for a king To kill Tataka, a woman, Ram ?
RAMA	:	Well, tell me whether it is nice For a Brahmin to handle a bow Like a hunter, Parashuram !
PARASHURAM	:	I doubt the righteousness of a king Who has killed a woman, Ram.
RAMA	:	But you killed your own Mother, Parashuram.
PARASHURAM	:	I did that because My father ordered me to do so, Ram.
RAMA	:	I too followed the advice Of my guru, Parashuram

- PARASHURAM : Don't be proud of bending the bow  
That was already broken, Ram.
- RAMA : I am still patient, Parashuram,  
Considering your learning.
- PARASHURAM : You have bent that bow (Shiva-Dhanush)  
But are you capable to handle  
this bow of mine, Ram ?
- RAMA : See Parashuram,  
I have done it;  
Will you tell me the target  
For my arrow now ?
- PARASHURAM : O, I am a Brahmin, Ram,  
What shall I say ?  
Pardon me, Ram.
- RAMA : I dislike talking to a man  
Of double birth (and double talk)  
After committing mistakes,  
You come to terms with truth.
- PARASHURAMA : Ram, I submit all that  
I have gained through my penance  
As the target for your arrow.
- RAMA : It is better for you  
To run back to your place,  
Parashuram.

4

### The Anger of Lakshmana

On hearing the news that Rama is being deprived of the crown of Ayodhya, Lakshmana strides past in anger and vows to give back the throne to Rama.

Crown I'll give to  
Rama, the pure,  
If my name is  
Lakshmana sure.  
Let the armies  
Against me march.  
Kill I will all  
With a single arrow sharp.  
Does Bharata deserve the crown ?



Can the blind have a king's looks ?  
 Dasaratha who cannot distinguish  
 Sugar from sand shall suffer now;  
 As the snow melts at the sight of the Sun  
 Foes who oppose me shall beat retreat.  
 The son of the temptress  
 Who made our prince a pauper  
 Shall run away like a lamb.  
 To the discomfort of mother Kaikeyi

Crown I'll give to  
 Rama, the pure,  
 If my name is  
 Lakshmana sure.  
 At the height of war  
 The demons shall join the chorus  
 The truncated bodies shall dance to the tune  
 The heads of the enemy kings.  
 Shall lay scattered like palm fruits.  
 The sea of blood shall rise high  
 The world shall see that  
 I am the willing slave to Rama !  
 None who oppose me  
 Including Brahma and the Devas  
 Shall survive my onslaught.  
 Let Dharma be firmly entrenched.

Crown I'll give to  
 Rama, the pure  
 If my name is  
 Lakshmana sure.  
 Will the moist soil and the burnt pot  
 mix with each other ?  
 Can a sparrow be an equal  
 To an eagle, however high it flies ?  
 Such is the craze of Bharata for power !  
 What is the use of my carrying a bow  
 If I fail to make a mound  
 Of my enemy's heads;  
 Let the whole of Ayodhya  
 And its warriors arraign against me;  
 I shall face them one and all.

Crown I'll give to  
 Rama, the pure  
 If my name is Lakshmana sure.

5

Rama and Guha

The love of Guha towards Rama is phenomenal. The brotherly affection shown by Rama to Guha, a hunter chieftain, makes him an embodiment of humanism. At the very first meeting, Guha's affection for Rama begins to flow like the sacred Ganga. He pleads with Rama to stay with him forever.

Please be here my Lord  
 Bless me, Sir, with your presence  
 The lady (Sita) is my mother  
 Your brother my brother too  
 And you my Saviour  
 I am your devotee, Guha

Please be here my Lord;  
 Bless me, Sir, with your presence !

Flowers and fruits are in plenty  
 Fresh meat and honey abound  
 Dresses of bark available too  
 Sumptuous food is also there  
 There are meadows beautiful  
 And Ganga serene  
 I am here too as your guard  
 Please be here my Lord;  
 Bless me, Sir, with your presence !

I will travel in all directions  
 Gather edible tubers for you  
 Conquer your foes  
 And protect you as the apple of my eye  
 Guide you in the pathless woods  
 And serve you with  
 Utmost devotion.  
 Please be here my Lord;  
 Bless me, Sir, with your presence !

Never shall I leave you alone;  
 Nothing is more important than you.  
 I am but a small person, Sir,  
 The very sight of your full-moon face  
 Is enough to quench my hunger  
 I know it is within my reach  
 —the ultimate “Moksha”  
 by being near to you.  
 Please be here my Lord;  
 Bless me, Sir, with your presence !

*Rama Nataka Kirtanai*, 18th century

Tr. by Sirpi Balasubramaniam

## The Gypsy of Kutralam

TIRIKUTA RASAPPAK KAVIRAYAR

TIRIKUDA RASAPPAK KAVIRAYAR (18th century) expounded the beauties of his local Tirukkutralam in different genres like *Malai* (garland), *Siletai* (pan), *Venpa*, *Ula* (procession), *Oodal* (sulking), *Pillaittamil* (song of childhood), etc. His best-known work is *Kutrala Kuravanji*. Kuravanji is the name of the Kurava damsel of the hilly region, practising sooth-saying. The heroine is Vasanta, whose heart is drawn to Lord Shiva of Kuttalam. Kuravanji studies her palm and announces her inclination to gain the love of Lord Shiva.

### 1

#### Fortune-teller Korava Gypsy Approaches

Here comes the Gypsy of Trigooda Mount  
 Through the broad streets of terraced houses,  
 Swinging her arms bangled, wand in hand,  
 An ornate basket on the hip, when Vasantavalli  
 Was found stupefied, deeply in divination,  
 Drawing concentric circles, as if to retrieve  
 Her bangles that has slipped down.  
 When the Divine Lord of Kutralam had been in procession.

### 2

He is the Lord  
 Of Trigooda Mount with peaks three  
 Sacred as they are, with marks of trident on them;

Of Chitra river, the water of which suffocates a young crane,  
That otherwise drinks and spits water plain.

Of Southern Tamil region where the rains perennial  
Fill up lakes to the brim and spate the streams;  
Of Kutralam where grow paddy, bananas juicy,  
And also succulent mangoes with sweetness overflowing;  
Of steeds that are sanctified with the Vedas;

He is the Lord

Who owns the celestial elephant with trunks, two thousand,  
Who has a pendant of bull that symbolises heroic victory;  
Who holds an auditorium spacious with three drums active;  
Who reigns gently and lovingly over all the universe  
Under a white canopy with his sceptre of royal power.  
Who wears a *konrai* garland, swarming with flies;  
Of blessing eyes towards the young damsel, *Kuzhal Vaimozhi*  
Who reigns in Trigooda and abides in orchids;  
The Lord of Divinity by whose mercy the korava girl sings  
With holy ash and a mark on her forehead, wearing garland  
of beads.

A basket on her clean and white-apparelled waist.  
A wand in her right hand for prophesying  
With utterance fanciful, swaying body and breast,  
Ogling her eyes and showy in all deportment,  
As if to restrain the pride of celestial maidens,  
To stir even saints with her sportive smile,  
To discipline the audience with her speech eloquent,  
To contain air-borne mystics with her sparkling eyes,  
Magically controlling demons, imps and even.

The effect of cymbals, drums and incarnations,  
Reigning the whole of Konkan, Aryan, Kucchala regions,  
With an effective administering of her magical wand,  
Establishing a tower of victory with her eloquent

Pandiya Tamil-

The regions of Kanarese, Telugu and Kalinga controlling.

Studying the palm of the royal personage's right hand,  
And that of the left hand of pleasant maidens,  
Searching for the rays of the past, present, future;  
Also to suit the minds of the customers  
Studying the eyes, language, gestures, and  
Whatever the symptom, capable of foretelling she,  
The dye-eyed korava girl, came in, before Vasanthavalli.



Elephants obstruct the aerial course of the moon,  
 presuming it a morsel of food;  
 Fragrance emerges from spicy trees, when uprooted by the  
 hill-tribes for millet-growing in the wilds.  
 Hill-goats would skip around and the clouds that  
 hover above, at a height, where even crows cannot fly;  
 Such is our hillocks where abides the Lord of Kailas  
 Under the shade of the jack-tree wild.

iv

The Southern Hill range that remains north of Kailas,  
 the one, that stands toweringly like the golden-hued  
 Meru Hills  
 This is the one, in the north, like the hillock of  
 Shivashailam in the South, my lady !  
 Fertile it is, with the richness of all mountains, Ma,  
 Yields gems pure such as diamonds and emerald !  
 Cave-strewn hillocks providing passage to the sun  
 of the sky to go through them;  
 Such is our hillocks of the Lord of Kuttralam who is  
 sought after  
 by Lord Vishnu, after he awakes from his slumber deep.

v

Kolli Hills is that of Selli, my younger, Ma !  
 Her consort's ancestral abode is Palani Hills.  
 My father's property is the cloud-hovering Mount of Vindhya.  
 Mount Himalayas is that of my brother,  
 Swamimalai in the South is that of my in-laws !  
 Velvi Hills at Nanjilnadu is owned by my maid.  
 Ours is the Hills of Trigooda where dance hordes of  
 Peacocks to the accompaniment of clouds roaring.  
 We don't either offer or wed girls homogenously;  
 Kinship held once we will never give up, Koravas as  
 we are;  
 Set aside the beasts fierce from stepping into cornfields;  
 Keeping in mind god's disguise once as Vengai tree  
 Gave we, in marriage once our girl to Muruka, the God  
 With a dowry, the whole range of mountains in the vicinity;  
 As we had given the sun-encircling Mount Meru to Lord Dhruva;  
 Our living place is that Hill of Trikooda where abides the Lord of Kuttralam.

## The Story of Raja Tejsing

ANONYMOUS

RAJA TEJ SING was a chieftain under Moghal rule at the Senji fort in South Arcot District during the 18th century. He was loved by his people and his valour was well-known. He refused to submit to the rule of Nawab of Arcot and as a result the army of the Nawab attacked Senji. In that battle he became a martyr.

The ballad *Desing Rajan Kathai* (Desin' Rājan Katai) glorifies the adventures of Desing. Some poignant scenes from the ballad are given below:

Let me tell you the happenings at Senji,  
 A child was born on the seventh day of Therani Rajan's departure;  
 Many in the city came to know of it.  
 With this birth Senji attained fame.  
 They read the child's horoscope.  
 The details made the ministers ecstatic.  
 Happily they gave away gifts to one and all  
 And distributed sweets to all.  
 The chieftains profusely presented gifts to Brahmins.  
 They named him Desingu Balan  
 And performed the ritual to protect him from evil eyes.  
 In twenty days came the news.  
 Theivarambayi wept in anguish.  
 The ministers and the people were perturbed.  
 In a frenzy of anguish fell down Andarambayi:  
 "You went away to the cruel land  
 Without seeing the child and sharing the joy.  
 If that is the will of Lord Ranga  
 What shall I do ?  
 Yet, I wish you all well".  
 The chaste woman wrote on a palm-leaf  
 The matter of the birth of the child  
 And did send it to the king.  
 Therani Rajan got the news—  
 A pleasant surprise to him !  
 He thought of Ranga and felt sorry  
 He wished the child good luck and kept quiet.  
 Let me now tell you about the child, Desingu;  
 In the third month he fell down trembling  
 In the seventh month he stumbled  
 Kicking at the golden cradle he fell to the ground

In the tenth month he toddled  
 And playing at his mother's lap  
 He would ask for his father.  
 Then he went to school to learn  
 He rode a horse with the lords around,  
 And ransacked forests, mountains and plants;  
 And would go round the fort riding the horse.  
 He performed pujas for the blessing of Lord Ranga.  
 He approached his mother announcing his hunger.  
 His mother had him on her lap and consoled  
 And fed him with mango, jack, plantain, milk and sweets.  
 He ate with love and rested  
 Then came out to fight.  
 He would send word for his classmate Mohammad Khan.  
 Both would wander on horse-back;  
 They ransacked forests, mountains and plains  
 Rushed to slay tigers, bears and lions  
 After hunting they would announce their success.  
 Jumping from the banks of Cankara Parani,  
 They would vie with each other in diving from above.  
 Throwing the nets they would come and dash,  
 Saluting Saiyed, they would jump across.  
 Kneeling down they threw mountains off.  
 Mountains would shatter under their mighty blow.  
 They somersaulted from a height of ten palm trees.  
 Arresting their breath leapt sky-high  
 And uprooted palm trees and played balls with them.  
 Listening, learning tricks and magic  
 Did Desingu spend five long years  
 After playing and wandering he would approach his mother.  
 To announce his hunger and stumble down.  
 His mother took him on her lap to quieten him,  
 And fed him with mango, jack, plantain, milk, and sweets  
 He ate with love and rested,  
 Looking at the face of his loving mother.  
 He would request her to spell out the problem of her heart.

"While other children are loved and helped  
 By their mothers and fathers,  
 My mother, dear, sweet mother, tell me  
 Where is my father? Tell at once"  
 On hearing this his mother  
 Took him to her lap, embraced him  
 Kissed him fondly and narrated



"Dear child, pupil of my eyes, diamond-like darling, listen  
 The Delhi Padsha sent invitations to all fifty-six kings  
 Your father and his brother left for Delhi  
 An untamed horse was let before them  
 And padsha ordered the kings mount the horse  
 Or failing, accepted seven years imprisonment.  
 Every king enthusiastically endeavoured  
 Accepting the challenge and failed.  
 The very sight of the horse bewildered them.  
 The kings in front of it swooned,  
 And those behind it fell on the ground.  
 The king who rose ran away  
 And accepted imprisonment for seven years,  
 Instead of mouning the horse and meeting death;  
 With the hope of returning home, with a sigh of relief  
 All the kings accepted the imprisonment.  
 Five years have now passed, dear son,  
 After two more years your father will return promptly."  
 On hearing this Desingu rose roaring like a lion  
 Grinding his teeth and kindled much  
 With rays of fire flying from his eyes  
 Reddened with rage and anger:

"Bless me, my mother, and permit me to go.  
 I'll come back in eight days.  
 Dear mother, let me go at once."  
 These words of Desingu threw her to the ground.  
 Unable to bear the pangs of separation,  
 The loving mother fell unconscious.  
 Understanding the anger of her son, she fell on the sand  
 Unable to see her son off the land (like her husband)  
 Squeezing her stomach she shed tears  
 And fell on the earth, fainted.  
 Understanding his mother's inability to see him off  
 Desingu stepped backwards to go away,  
 Took bath in Cankara Parani,  
 And entered the temple of Lord Ranga,  
 Went around Him with devotion,  
 And prostrated before Him and said:  
 "Lord Ranga, I am leaving for Delhi.  
 Bless me on my journey,  
 And be with me to make the trip successful.

I, your child, am going to the city.  
Go with me please, quick, my lord."  
This, the lord heard  
And blessed him: "Only good will happen,  
My son, my intelligent son; go;  
Go and come back with laurels, my dear one !"

*Desing Rajan Kathai*, 18th century

*Tr.* by V. Ayothi

# Medieval Telugu Literature

## Shakuntala

NANNAYA

NANNAYA BHATTU (11th century) is called the “Adikavi” or the first poet of Telugu literature. *Mahabharatamu* (Mahābhāratamu), incompletely composed by him, is the first available literary work in Telugu. Only the first two and a half of the total eighteen parvas of *Mahabharata* are available with his authorship. He claims himself to be the *Kulabrahmana* of Raja Raja Narendra and mentions this king's request to render *Mahabharata* into Telugu to be the inspiration behind his work. Raja Raja Narendra is the eastern Chalukyan king whose date is fixed as 1022-63. Hence Nannaya must have composed his *Mahabharata* during this period.

Some other works attributed to him are *Andhrashabdachintamani*, *Lakshanasaramu*, *Chamundikavilasamu*, *Indravijayamu* and *Raghavaabhyudayamu*.

Genre-wise, the original *Mahabharata* in Sanskrit is a Sastretihasa. Critics have called Nannaya's *Mahabharatamu* a Kavyetihasa. Thus Nannaya's work is not a mere translation of Vyasa's *Mahabharata* into Telugu, but a transcreation, an independent literary work keeping the purpose of the original work intact.

Conventionally, Nannaya's style is discussed in terms of three phrases used by him; *prasannakathakalitharthayukti*, *akshararamyata* and *nana ruchirartha sukti nidhitvamu*; these are taken to mean lucidity in narration, musicality of language and proverbial versification respectively.

By the time Nannaya was composing his work, Anandavardhana's Dhvani theory came into vogue and pro-Dhvani schools became dominant in poetics. Nannaya chose this theory of Dhvani as his literary philosophy. That is why his style is centered around Dhvani, especially Vastudhvani or suggestive content. His *prasannakathakalitarthayukti* refers to this centrality of Vastudhvani in his style. *Akshararamyata* refers to the other important quality of his poetic language viz., the prominence of *shabdaguna*.

*Mahabharata* is intended to be the story of the Pandavas against the background of the traditions laid down by the forerunners of their dynasty. The stories of these early forefathers and founders of the Chandravamsha or Lunar Dynasty of Pandavas are described elaborately in this epic. Bharata is the most significant of these Chandravamsha forefathers. In fact, the Pandavas are referred to as Bharatas after this great figure and *Mahabharata* itself is named after him. The

story of Shakuntala and Dushyanata is the story of his parents and occupies a prominent place among the stories of the Chandravamsha forefathers occurring in the Adiparva of *Mahabharata*. The Gandharva marriage between Shakuntala and Dushyanta is the theme of the selected piece. This portion is well-known for the narrative technique, suggestive content alone with the Shravya (aural) and Drishyakavya (visual) features of Nannaya's poetry.

The following is verses 8-61 from the Fourth Canto of *Adi Parva* of *Mahabharatamu*.

Mighty Dushyanta ruled the world entire  
that spread through the corners all  
borne by the elephants eight and reigned  
the kingdom and the woods impenetrable  
by the rays of the sun, by dint of strength physical.

Under his dispensation, the earth grew  
with people plentiful—free from disease,  
sorrow, misery, decay and doubt—  
and prospered full well in virtue.

One day the king started out on a hunting expedition in the forest, mounted on a chariot fitted with horses swifter than the horses of the chariot of the Sun-god. Accompanying him were horsemen riding on horses of the finest breed. Brave soldiers in thousands, wielding spears, bows and daggers also went with him, as he proceeded on the hot pursuit of the animals in the forest.

Like the mount Mandara the might  
of Dushyanta did stir the ocean  
of the forest with the cackle  
of shouts and cries and in the beasts  
did awe and terror strike.

The doughty king did roam around  
forest frightful with herds  
of massive *sharabhas*, lions,  
pigs, tigers and elephants.

He speared down the animals  
fleeing in fright; with a dagger  
he slew the beasts near at hand;  
countless ferocious animals  
did he kill with his zest for hunt.

Thus the king went on slaying the animals which came his way, but wishing to hunt further, he rode farther off. The soldiers on foot were hungry and thirsty and could not keep pace with the chariot. They rested themselves on the way here and there. Accompanied by the ministers, the priest and a few attendants, Dushyant reached a certain place in the forest. Before him appeared on the banks of a holy river a fascinating orchard full of plants and trees blooming with fragrant flowers and delicious fruits, and creepers and bushes.

Out of love for humans did the creator  
make a stretch of land to equal  
the *khandava* garden of Indra  
or the charming orchard of Kubera.  
As the king entered the orchard,  
admiring the bounty of nature,  
the creepers, like lovely lasses,  
did shower flowers on the king  
like bells of sacred rice;  
the sweet drone of bees  
blessed him in tender syllables  
and to his heart did bliss bring.

And further,

And full tired as he was  
killing with no respite  
the beasts fleeing in the woods,  
the gentle breeze blowing over him  
made his exhaustion light.

Move around as he did in the orchard  
full-blossomed chrysanthemums did he see  
and he noticed too the *ashoka* flowers  
blooming atop radiant bushes,  
the celestial *ponnas*, the *jaji* flowers,  
the fruit-laden mango trees and rows  
of plantain trees and listened to  
the sweet voices of the cuckoos and parrots.

Sauntering further on, the king espied  
the bees hovering over the bows of trees  
entwined by creepers, though flowerless,  
yet fragrant with the smell of ghee

and offerings during yajnas; the king surmised,  
it must indeed be the abode of sages.

The king walked further on in the orchard, which brought great bliss to his heart, listening also to the chantings of the Vedic hymns recited in sacred rhythms by learned brahmins, to the ceaseless sounds of *swaha* as the sages made offerings into the sacrificial fires, to the voices of disputing scholarly saints seeking to evaluate the texts of *Nyaya* held in esteem by the erudite and to the voices of the assembled scholars debating the Mimamsika interpreters. The orchard was also the abode of priests proficient in performing sacrifices and of the ascetics observing rigorously the religious rites ordained and also of the great sages performing deep penance. The orchard on the banks of the Ganga, like the abode of the human and the divine as well, looked a holy place indeed. It was the hermitage of Kanva.

As the parrots chanted the *Sama Veda*  
in a melody pleasing to the ear,  
the elephants stood fascinated;  
enchanted by the cool of the waters  
sprayed out by the elephants with trunks,  
the lions lay there in bliss supreme;  
cats and mice together gobbled up  
the rice offerings made by the brahmins  
to the spirits elemental; the animals  
thus forgot their natural enmity  
and lived in peace and tranquillity.  
The spiritual power of the sage  
did the king to no end amaze.

The king told his retinue that he would pay his respects to Sage Kanva of the Kashyapa lineage and asked them to stay a little away till he returned.

All by himself did the king proceed,  
keeping the minister and the attendants  
afar and at the hermitage of the sage  
did he meet Shakuntala of the lotus eyes  
and lustrous hair as black as a bevy of bees.

Recognizing that the person more charming than Manmatha, the lord of love, was Dushyanta, Shankuntala hurried towards him to offer water for washing the feet, and water too for drinking, and a proper chair for him. She

greeted him respectfully and enquired of his welfare. Hereupon Dushyanta said:

"For hunting have I to these parts come  
and wished to call on Sage Kanva  
and respects pay. Where has the Noble One  
gone—may I know?" To this the lady replied,  
"He left but now for the forest  
to bring some fruits. Of your arrival  
when he would learn, he would return anon."

And the lady added that it might be a little while when the sage would return. Pleased by the courtesy and sweet words of the lady, the king felt that she might be an unmarried girl. Looking at the well-proportioned limbs, resembling those of the goddess of love, the king felt a little disturbed at heart and wished to know whose daughter she was, and how was it that she came down over there. To this she replied

"O Lord of the land, may you know  
that I am the daughter of Sage Kanva,  
renowned as the incarnation of virtue  
and revered by the world entire."

"If she were indeed the daughter of the sage,  
how is that my heart is stuck with her?  
Somehow to take her word as true  
is difficult indeed: the sage is reputed  
to have the senses conquered." The king grew  
curious to learn the fact of the matter.  
And out of curiosity, he implored the girl to narrate the  
story of her birth.

"Sage Kanva, wedded to the rigors  
of the hermitage, did the reputation win  
to have the senses conquered  
and enjoyed great fame far and wide.  
How then could you, dear lady, become  
to such a sage a daughter? Please,  
lotus-eyed lady, enlighten me; won't you?"  
As the king appealed to her thus, she replied:

"An ascetic curious enquired of Kanva once,  
who may this lotus-eyed Shankuntala be  
and what may the story of her birth be.  
To this query, Kanva narrated the story  
and that did I happen to overhear.

I shall relate the story of my birth as narrated by Sage Kanva to the ascetic. Please listen," said Shakuntala to Dushyanta and went on thus:

'Vishwamitra, the great king-saint,  
through spiritual strength did acquire  
the state of a brahmin-saint; once  
did he engage himself in deep meditation,  
at which Indra, the Lord of Gods,  
was frightened full and called up  
the doe-eyed Menaka, the loveliest  
of Apsara damsels, and bade her reach  
the place of Vishwamitra and said:  
Disturb his meditation and save  
my lordship for me ! The damsel,  
trembling all over, saluted the lord  
and replied: You know very well,  
my lord, Vishwamitra drowned  
even Vasishta, the descendant of Brahma,  
in the ocean of childlessness;  
and all the gods right down from you  
were scared stiff of him. Is it fair  
to send me over to the incarnation of anger  
on this hapless mission, my lord ?  
The moment the saint looks in anger  
the mountains bearing the earth will break,  
and the oceans, save the sand, will dry up,  
and the three worlds, reel and reel  
and even the breeze trembles to blow.  
Can a feeble woman, my lord, approach  
such an embodiment of fierce anger ?

'Nevertheless, I will try my best to soften the heart of the ascetic and to lead to it on to the power of the lord of love,' said Menaka and took leave of Indra. Accompanied by gentle mountain breeze, she proceeded towards Vishwamitra's place of penance, the Himalayan mountain.

The cool southern breeze blew  
ever so gently across the hair-do  
of the damsel blending its fragrance  
with the aroma of the flowers  
adorning the hair-do and the mix  
blew all over the ascetic.



And then

The damsel celestial tiptoeing gracefully  
like a new-blossomed flower arrived  
on the spot and saw before her  
in deep meditation the formidable ascetic  
Vishwamitra, the vanquisher of the lord of love.

On seeing the ascetic, the lotus-eyed lady  
humbly did salute him and saunter  
over there on the pretext of plucking  
flowers, with the bevy of her friends.

Tired and slightly benumbed by the blend  
of flavours in front of the ascetic,  
the damsel lost her balance; there slipped  
the upper garment a little; out appeared  
the shapely breasts, the armpits,  
the tender waist, the three folds  
and the hair lustrous on the belly.

As his eyes got caught in the sight,  
the sharp arrows of the lord of love  
pierced his heart; the ascetic lost control  
and hungered to unite with the lady.

Complying with the wish of Vishwamitra, Menaka spent a length of time  
in erotic play with the saint. A girl was born out of that union. Menaka  
abandoned the girl on the sandy banks of the river Malini and departed for  
her heavenly abode. Vishwamitra returned to the forest to resume his  
meditation. But under the spiritual powers of the saint,

To protect the child  
from meat-eating beasts,  
Shakunta birds covered  
the child with leaves of trees.

One of those days, we happened to go to that place accompanied by  
disciples to collect fruits and flowers, and saw on the banks of the river the  
girl protected by Shakunta birds. She was all resplendent and looked like the  
moon's rays which descended on the earth. We brought her here to this  
hermitage and, as she was protected by the Shakunta birds, we named her  
Shakuntala and brought her up with great affection.

The father, the one who feeds  
and the one who delivers from fear  
are the three teachers for a lady;  
these three, the one who performs  
*upanayna* and the one who stands  
as preceptor for life and truly  
the five teachers for menfolk.

From our knowledge of Shastras we may say that she is to me a daughter; as we freed her from fear, we are her teacher. We have brought her up and she is verily the daughter who filled our hearts with joy." Shakuntala thus narrated her story to Dushyanta as Kanva told the ascetics. At that Dushyanta thought to himself:

'Full desperate did I feel when I heard  
that she was the daughter of the sage,  
but as she revealed the truth of her birth  
as the daughter of a king, now,  
the arrows of the love-lord assailed the heart,  
once again, and the heart did tremble  
like the lotus assailed by the bees.'

Deep in love full of excitement, Dushyanta was eager to express his love for her and he said:

'The barks of trees, the forest fruit as food,  
the dwelling in cottage—are they meet  
for your pure shining grace, dear lady?  
With love peerless become my consort,  
enjoy the pleasures of my kingdom,  
live in the moon-kissing palaces,  
and rest on the pials studded with gold.

'Marriages are eight in kind;  
Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya,  
Rakshasa, Asura, Gandharva and Paisacha;  
for the true king Gandharva and Rakshasa  
are indeed the most suited. As love  
has grown between us, Dharma ordains  
that we marry the Gandharva way.' To this,  
with head bent with shyness, Shakuntala,  
the tender-limbed one, replied:

'My father Kanva, the fount of mercy  
and the embodiment of all virtues,  
will arrive soon. Should he offer me  
to you, you may well take  
my hand in matrimony sacred.'

To that Dushyant replied:

'One is the relative of oneself  
and one the prop for oneself  
and when one offers oneself  
one indeed is the donor too.  
Gandharva way, lotus-eyed one,  
is strictly confidential  
and entirely without Vedic chants.'

As Dushyanta explained the Gandharva way of matrimony, Shakuntala agreed and said:

'Please assure me, O lord of men,  
with pleasant temper and affection  
and with no hesitation whatsoever  
that the son born as gift from you  
shall be crowned a king and then  
shall we meet in the sport of love.'

Thereupon Dushyanta promised Shakuntala as desired and gladdened her. After enjoying the desired pleasure in the Gandharva way, he bade her farewell promising her that he would send his chief advisers to Sage Kanva to take her to the capital and left for his city.

From *Andhra Mahabharatamu*, 11th century

Tr. by S. Prabhankar Rao

## The Story of Bejja Mahadevi

PALKURIKI SOMANATHUDU

PALKURIKI SOMANATHUDU (Pāḷkuriki Sōmanāthuḍu, 12-13th century) is the most well-known of the Veerashaiva poets who dominated the Telugu literary scene during the twelfth-thirteenth century. A versatile and multilingual poet, he composed several works in Telugu, Kannada and Sanskrit. *Basavapurānamu* (Basavapurānamu) and *Pāṇḍitarādhyācharitramu* (Paṇḍitārādhyācharitramu) are his epic narrative works in Telugu, among which *Basavapurānamu* is his magnum opus. Apart from these two major writings he composed a few small but significant

metaphysical writings like *Anubhavasaramu* and *Chaturvedasaramu* and a few books in the form of branches of individual subjective hymns such as *Chennamallu Seesamulu*, *Vrishadhipashatakamu* and *Basavodharanamu*. In Sanskrit he wrote commentaries like *Somanadha Bhashyam*, and prose hymns like *Namaskara Gadya*. In Kannada he composed lyrical poems such as *Basava Ragada* and *Sadguru Ragada*.

The significance of Palkuriki Somanath allies in his being a propagandist poet of old times who devoutly and zealously strove to propagate Veerashaivism through all possible literary genres.

Though Nannaya's work itself marked the emergence of a native framework for literary composition in Telugu, it is Veerashaiva poets, his immediate successors, who made their urge for native qualities in poetry very explicit in their writings. It is these poets beginning with Nannechoda, an older contemporary of Palkuriki Somanatha, who repeatedly proclaimed their deliberate attempt to compose Deshi poetry in contrast to the Marga poetry which is *Kumarga* or the bad path. Palkuriki Somanatha also makes such zealous assertions in the prelude to his *Basavapuranam*.

*Basavapuranam* is composed in Dvipada, a two-line native metre known for its lyrical nature and found in Telugu folk ballads. Though the metre of this work shows the influence of oral tradition, this work itself seems to have been composed for religious singing.

The name *puranam* of this book needs to be understood not in the sense of the Vedic Puranas attributed to Vyasa, but in the sense of Kannada Jaina Puranas which are actually descriptions of the life and divine powers of the Jaina Tirthankaras. The theme of *Basavapurana* is the story of Basava, the founder of Veerashaivism combined with numerous stories of the Shaivite devotees.

Even before Bhakti got recognition as a Rasa in poetics, it seems to have been established in folk literature, especially devotional literature as a fullfledged Rasa. Works like *Basavapurana* have brought this quality of native folk literature into the stream of critical writings through their adoption of folk themes and expression modes into classical literature.

In contrast to *madhura bhakti*, prominent in Vaishnavism, *mugdha bhakti* seems to be the prominent mode of Bhakti in Veerashaiva literature. *Mugdha bhakti* lies in the devotee's dealing with his god through human relations like motherly love or daughterly affection, driven by his childlike innocence and insurmountable emotions. The story of Bejja Mahadevi is the most popular of moving stories of *mugdha bhakti*. The present excerpt from Canto III tells the story in which Bejja Mahadevi treats Shiva as her darling son and thus serves as the best example of *vatsalya*-based *mugdha bhakti* of Veerashaivism.

"And listen to this as well. A lady named Bejja Mahadevi, one whose inner mind as absorbed in the auspicious lotus feet of Shiva the black-necked lord, thought, 'It is indeed very strange. In spite of the fact that he has all kinds of

staff, many relatives, and a large number of attendants, Bharga doesn't have a mother. How was he even born without a mother? Perhaps the mother of the lord of the three worlds is dead. Alas! What can be done about this? Wasn't I very sad when my mother died? Doesn't everyone experience such grief? But if he did have a mother, how could she have let him to become an ascetic? If he had a mother, how could she allow him to drink poison? If he had a mother, how could she let him wear animal skin? How could a mother let him wear snakes? Would a mother let her son wear ashes all over his body? Would a mother let her son wander about all over the world? Could a mother let her son live in the cremation ground? The only explanation is that he does not have a mother. That is why he has become such a rascal and gotten into so much trouble.

"If he did have a mother to nurse him, she would have served him butter and given him a lot of milk. She would have been fully aware of it when he was hungry, and she would have given him enough milk to fill his stomach. She would have lovingly cared for him, and she would have raised him affectionately.

"Even without a mother, he is very big. If he had a mother, imagine how much bigger he would have become. No matter how big a boy is, wouldn't he grieve without a mother to take care of him at the time of marriage, domestic festivals, feast days, and celebrations? Is it right to remain silent when a thing like this is going on? Let me become Hara's mother. And let me take care of him. A woman who will take care of him without holding back anything will be the right mother for him," she thought. And Bejja Mahadevi began to think of herself as Paramesa's mother, and he became her son.

"She poured oil on the linga and gave him a shampoo. She wiped his nose. She scrubbed his cheeks. She washed his third eye. She wiped his belly, and she patted his back. She wanted the boy to grow big; so she pulled his arms and legs as she massaged them. She rubbed his body with cleaning paste. She held him affectionately. She poured water on his back. With both hands cupped, she poured water over his head. Afraid that some water might get into his mouth, she pressed his stomach and put her hand across his mouth to keep it out. She put turmeric on his body and bathed him. She blew into his eyes and ears to clear them. With her finger she pressed his palate. She immediately wiped off the water that dripped from his body. She took water in her hand and sprinkled it on the earth. And taking a pinch of soil, she applied it as a mark with her thumb. She took the softest ash that clung to the edge of the pot, and she applied them to her son's forehead. Afraid that she might stunt his growth by carrying him too much, she gave him a hug and put him down. Wanting to make his eyes larger, she put lamp-black around them. When she applied the lamp-black, all of his eyes became one. She gave him milk from her breast, and she did

not let birds fly over his head. She gave him a little butter. She slapped his cheeks with her fingers and made him open his mouth and cry. Then she put one finger in his mouth and gave him a little mixture of castor oil and milk. After that she consoled him, pacified him, and caressed him. She kissed him to make him laugh and begged him for kisses in return. She asked him who he was. She made her belly into a bed for him and sang him gentle lullabies. When she did all this and raised him like her own son, Shiva praised her for her innocent, steadfast devotion. And he stayed there and accepted all the services she rendered to him as a son.

“*‘Shruti* says, ‘He has no other form.’ *Smriti* says, “A devotee shall always think of (him), “ and, further, it says, “He takes the form in which the devotee thinks of him.” Since these are the words of Hara, how can they be wrong? Isn’t it true that howsoever a devotee conceives of Shiva, that is the form in which he appears?’ said the assembly of devotees, praising her.

“After some days had passed, the God of gods wanted to bestow his grace on his mother; so he feigned a terrible sickness. He did not open his mouth to nurse, and he did not open his mouth to take butter. The mother was shocked. Unable to control her grief, she said, ‘My father! My boy! My infant! My little bachelor! My little man! Why don’t you suck my breasts? When I see your perspiration, my blood runs cold. Oh! How can I even look at you? Am I not your mother? Can I bear all of this? I have no one else but you? You are my only son, and I have no other! How can I be silent and keep from grieving? My legs are no longer able to stand on the earth! Why don’t you say something and tell me what is wrong? Do you have a sore throat? Is your throat blistered? Do you have a sore palate? I have no idea what medicine will make it better.’

“She talked deliriously. She fell down and rolled on the floor. Her body boiled up. She embraced the boy. She covered him, uncovered him, and covered him up again. She kept watching him and became even more agitated. His belly became bloated. People told her that it was a sore palate. Beside herself with fear, she fell into an ocean of grief.

“When she saw the condition that her son was in, the woman said, ‘You were still a little bit hungry and so you went to Odaya Nambi’s. But there was nothing to get there and nothing to eat. You went to Cherama Chakravarti and danced to his music, and you became weak from hunger. Then you realized that those useless activities were not going to fill your stomach, and you quickly came back. So you went and did the king’s unpaid labour for Pittavva. Finally, you found yourself a little something to eat. In the Samavedulu’s house a calf had died, and they cooked it and fed it to you. And you ate it! Then you went to Chennayya’s house and gobbled up the leftover rice without even letting your hand rest. You asked Chirutonda Nambi

for the flesh of his son, and you made a feast of that. Without even pausing, you went on to Nimmavva's house and ate there too. As if that were not enough, Chodavva gave you something salty in a bowl, and you ate that, too. You also took morsels of food from the hands of Surya Chaudayya. I am afraid that you really did do all these things. I heard all of this from a lady yesterday. My boy ! Is it good to put me to all this trouble ? Why should you dissipate yourself by acting like that ? And then why should you eat more than you can possibly hold ? Can you survive if you go on eating everywhere but at home ? How can you avoid getting bloated if you do that ? I will give you my breast again and again. Furthermore, I will never fail to give you milk and butter. My son, don't you know that I will feed you ? Why should you behave like this ? What you had was always enough before. But now you go out and ask for food without ever being contented ? Didn't you have enough to eat yesterday ? I have not kept anything back from you. Day and night you never leave my arms. Can there be any other boy who is so impossible ?' She was vexed with him, and she talked intimately with him. Was she not his mother ?

"Now, is there any mother in the three worlds who is more affectionate than I am ? You yourself are witness to the fact that I am treating you like my own life-breath. If you had stayed where I put you and if you had eaten what I gave you, would you have suffered from any disease or felt any pain ? Is fire attacked by white ants ? You have become sick because of the things that you did to yourself. How else would you get such a disease ? What shall we do now ? Is talking going to cure your illness ? Why should I keep asking about your folly ? My son, I cannot bear to see your affliction any longer. Because of you I am going to give up my life-breath.'

"As she was about to take it out on her own head, Shiva appeared, stood before his mother, and said, 'Ask whatever you want, and I will give it to you.'

"Son ! Do I have anything to ask from you ? The only thing I could possibly want would be to have you comfortable, well and live for ever. The parent has more love for the child whom she raises than for the child to whom she gives birth. I always want to be able to see you with my own eyes. Therefore, what I really want is to have you stay here with me,' she said.

"With a gentle smile on his lotus face, he embraced his mother and said, 'Because you are my mother, you are the grandmother of the three worlds. Mother, how can a boy ever be sick with a mother like you ?' And he gave his mother eternal life.

"Because she had become the mother of a god who is superior and always blissful, she became known as Ammavva."

## Infatuation

### TIKKANA

TIKKANA SOMAYAJI (Tikkana Sōmayāji, 1220-1280) is the second of the trinity of poets who shared the composition of *Mahabharatamu* in Telugu. It was Tikkana who composed the major portion, i.e. the last fifteen of the eighteen parvas of *Mahabharatamu*. (Errana, 14th century, is the other member of the trinity who composed the "remainder" of the third parva, i.e. Aranya Parva, which was found to have been left unfinished by Nannaya). He was praised by contemporary poets as *Kavi Brahma* and *Ubhaya Kavimitra*.

He was the court-poet and minister in the court of Manumasiddhi, king of Telugu Choda Dynasty of Nellore. Prior to *Mahabharatamu* he wrote *Nirvachanottararamayanamu* and dedicated it to his king. He dedicated his *Mahabharatamu* to Hariharanatha, a god with Shiva and Vishnu as two halves of his body. Against the background of the times earlier to Tikkana which was a period of violent friction between Shaivism and Vaishnavism, this God and dedication to him are looked upon as an aversion for this clash and an attempt at reconciliation.

Tikkana seems to be an experimentalist in composing *Nirvachanottararamayanamu*. This book is composed in the same metres as those used in Telugu *champu* kavyas without the prose element (*nirvachana*) in them. Another experiment in his book is the creation of a kavya with two rasas and two stories, deviating from the unity of rasa and unity of story of the kavya tradition. This is the first nirvachana kavya in Telugu.

In composing *Mahabharatamu* Tikkana tried to maintain the uniformity of style by keeping up the characteristics of Nannaya's style, i.e. the centrality of Dhvani. But unlike Nannaya, he made Rasadhvani central in his poetic composition. Tikkana's literary composition is meaning-dominated in contrast to the sound-dominated composition of Nannaya.

Tikkana claims that he has *ubhayakavyaproudhi* or maturity or advancement in two kinds of kavya compositions, which is interpreted by critics as a skillful blend of narrative and drama-like composition techniques. The word *shilpamu* meaning sculpture, used by Tikkana with reference to his poetic skill has become popular in the Telugu critical jargon, in the sense of poetic technique.

The time of Tikkana in the history of the Andhras is known for the attempts to win glory and independence for the Andhras in different spheres such as fine arts, politics and culture. The idea of a single empire for all the Telugu-speaking people seems to have been emerging at this time. Jayappa, a general of king Ganapathi Deva of Kakatiya Dynasty, composed *Nrta Ratnavali* (1253-54); a Sanskrit book on dance in verse with emphasis on *deshi* elements in dance. The sculpture of this period as evidenced by the sculptures of the Ramappa temple near Warangal, indicates the evolution of a Telugu style in sculpture. These



sculptures are taken to indicate a native style of classical dance flourishing during those times. Tikkana's meta-poetic vocabulary and concepts are interpreted against this background. Tikkana used the word *Rasamu* and other related vocabulary in the connotation of *Natyashastra* also and not only in the connotation of poetics. Tikkana is admired for his success in getting epic status to common Telugu people's idiom. *Virata Parvamu* of Tikkana's *Mahabharatamu* is representative of all those poetic qualities for which Tikkana is known. The selected piece is from this *Parvamu*. This excerpt is part of the *Keechakavadha* episode of this *Parvamu*.

*Virata Parvamu* is the story of the Pandavas living incognito at the court of Virata in different guises. In this episode Simhabala, known also as Keechaka, the brother-in-law of the Virata king, gets infatuated by the beauty of Sairandhri, a servant-maid of Virata king's wife, and chases her after failing to get her consent for his love. Sairandhri is in fact Draupadi in disguise. She runs into the court of the Virata king for rescue. Bheema, the middle of the Pandavas, gets infuriated by Keechaka's behaviour and kills him in a wrestling duel on a dark night at the dance palace. The excerpt is about Keechaka's chasing of Draupadi.

Thus staying on,  
Evading scrutiny with tact and care,  
The Pandavas and Draupadi came near  
The year's end while a few days just remained.

The king's brother-in-law and army chief,  
The eldest-born of the Keechakas, a vain  
And boastful beau, perverse and proud of might,  
Named Simhabala, going in  
To bow to his sister Sudeshna, saw  
Beside her, Draupadi whose beauty drew  
His gaze resistlessly; so he stood still  
With senses uncontrolled, with mind unwound,  
And will-power lost. His deer-like heart, enmeshed  
In her form, fell to the love-god; the hunter chief,  
He mused: "Hath any man seen anywhere  
Such a form? Would not Upendra fondly gaze  
On her? The god of love's writ through her prevails  
O'er the worlds. The fulfillment of former good  
Is but to enjoy her. Even the lords supreme  
Of the goddesses must dote on her. She must  
Be made, like jewellery of gems and gold,  
With the love-god's flowery arrows five, well fused  
And shaped, with life breathed into. At the sight of her,

E'en the love-god would his tendril umbrella  
And flowery quiver transform into beds  
To lie and soothe his pangs of love."

Now Keechaka desired to learn about  
Her parentage, her name, her lord, her place,  
And how he could enjoy her and which friend  
Would help in this endeavour. Swept in this  
Whirlwind of passion, he looked amorous  
And felt like making love to her then  
And there; but he somehow refrained at the sight  
Of others, unaware the while that she  
Herself loath'd him and his rough looks.  
At his audacious gaze, she raged in mind  
And sweated; at the power of Providence  
Producing such improper acts, she felt  
Astounded; out of fear that here was none  
To guard her, she did tremble; ta'en aback,  
And helpless what to do, she did turn pale  
In face; all this the foolish man mistook  
For amorous expression; encouraged  
By it, in passion's ocean-tide he plunged.  
The light out of her tender frame o'erflowed;  
The lightning flash from her fair hand o'erspread;  
The shooting lights of her dear face o'erpowered;  
The glamour of her glossy eyes o'erwhelmed;  
Thus he, with all this colour-riot o'ercome,  
Remained like some machine in the love-god's hands.  
Now he, eager to hear what all was known  
Of her, withdrew at length his gaze from her  
And bowed unto his sister; greeting him,  
She offered a golden seat; he hastily  
Pointing to Draupadi, desired to know  
Minute details of her; the Queen now saw  
How he was smitten by the love-god; and she sought  
To turn his mind from Draupadi by change  
Of topic; but unable to keep back,  
He loitered near the seeming stewardess  
And addressed her: "O Fairy sweet-faced,  
Has there e're been on earth a match to you  
In beauty? Tell me your name and who you are."

These words though hearing, she seemed not to hear,  
 And unperturbed kept quiet; then he resumed;  
 "Would you not open your eyes and see, so that  
 Your eye-light overflows ? Would you not smile,  
 So that your face should doubly bloom ?  
 Would you not please in reply speak a word  
 So that your pearly teeth might shine the best ?  
 Would you not take my hand so that your heart's  
 Romance be manifest ?" So saying, he  
 Did ogle, simper, pout, and offer hand  
 Attempting love-display. Still knowing not  
 Her mind, he thus explained his gross desire;  
 "I would not take a full view of you, for fear  
 Of evil eye, the word that sprouts within  
 My mind, deterred by your great dignity  
 Does fail to reach the tip of the tongue. See how  
 My hand shakes trying to hold your hands.  
 Your mind eludes my eager scrutiny.  
 If any longer you remain to me  
 Indifferent, I surely will be slain  
 By the love-god, and then by no means can you  
 Recover me."

Affronted thus, aware  
 Of his conceit, she well controll'd herself,  
 And tactfully replied: "O brother, see  
 My wretched plight, this body and these clothes;  
 How can this my repulsive state provoke  
 Your lust ? Does such a speech befit good men ?  
 You too have sisters; furthermore, myself  
 A low-caste married woman, I am unfit  
 For your accosting."

Unaffected by  
 This sound remonstrance, he, grown mad with lust,  
 Again outpoured: "The lotus-softness press'd  
 To beauty are your feet; the light of moon  
 Unstained and perfected—it is your face.  
 The glossy black of bees well-grown in first  
 Plantation is your hair; such lovely shape  
 Is meant for finest pleasures; why do you  
 Evade ? O, paragon of excellence;

That you are now low-born, the witness is  
Yourself, I'd rather bear that heinous sin  
Adultery than cruel love-god's shafts."

Then, Draupadi enraged and thinking that  
A threat alone could soften down the brute,  
Declared that now her five Gandharva lords  
Whose superhuman prowess none withstood,  
Would surely him disgrace and soon destroy.  
But he said: "Not your husbands only, but  
No one in the three worlds can me confront  
In valour. You, believe it true." She lost  
All patience, and defying said; "You fool,  
Does it avail, forgetting right and wrong,  
To aim at fruits forbidden and too high?  
Of ruin's men like Ravana, have you  
Not heard?"

Discomfited, he now return'd  
Unto his sister sadly, and consumed  
In the love-god's fire, blown with sighing breath,  
Not finding one to comfort him, said he:  
"That woman whom I pointed unto you  
Enquiring of her family and name,  
My heart is yearning after; you should know  
My mind; she was with you; where is she gone?"

Seeing his haste, she made a knowing nod  
And thought: "Alas! he is enamoured of  
The stewardess. What danger might ensure  
From this? He's not the man to heed my good  
Advice. What then, O Fate, am I to do?  
Well, to dissuade him I will try my best."  
She therefore said: "So many stars are here  
At court, who with their beauty, manners, smiles  
And loving speech, are suited best for your  
Amours. Why, leaving them, do you desire  
This graceless servant-maid?"

Scorning her words,  
He said: "Not here but e'en at Indra's court,  
There are no beauties, none that can compare

To her. Born unto fish and going pairs  
 With the love-god's arrows, are her eyes. Well-trained  
 By lotus-stalks and so excelling far  
 The creepers are her soft hands. Making peace  
 with tendrils, waging war with lotuses,  
 Are her fine feet. Receiving lessons from  
 The cuckoos and imparting them to lyre  
 Is her sweet voice. Where can we find a match  
 To her? You speak unknowingly. If you  
 Would not by some means make her mine,  
 I fall to the love-god's shafts and pining die."

Sudeshna spoke again, admonishing:  
 "Know you not that adultery destroys  
 One's life, good name and fortunes? It is abhorred  
 By all right minds; its least exposure spells  
 Disaster and dishonour worse than death.  
 Besides, I dread to think about her five  
 Gandharva lords; brother, desire her not  
 Thus going wrong, one loses life; the wise  
 Ne'er take forbidden diet, most tasteful though  
 It be; restrain your passion; heed my word,"

Thus warn'd, reacting sharply he burst out:  
 "My might and prowess are well-known to all.  
 As Indra's bolt does smash a mountain-range,  
 Her husbands I will easily destroy.  
 So, stop advising me; somehow contrive  
 To satisfy my wish; if you delay,  
 I am consumed in passion's fire; if you  
 Wish me to live, chide not, but send for her"

So saying, and with face turn'd pale, he rose  
 Sudd'nly, and near her foot-stool fell prostrate.  
 Seeing him thus, the Queen, with down-cast face,  
 Convinced how hopeless 'twas to change his mind,  
 How he, unless he got his wish fulfilled,  
 Would never rest, and anyway must die  
 By the love-god's arrows, raised him gently up;  
 And swallowing within her eyes the stream  
 Of tears, she said; "Why grieve you so much?  
 Somehow I shall send her to you; so, go

Comforted; stay no longer here; this day  
 Under pretext of errand to bring wine,  
 I'll send her to your place; then well enjoy  
 Your wish." So, pleased he went back home,  
 Got drinks and dishes most delicious made,  
 Then cleared his place of people, and indulged  
 In thoughts voluptuous of Draupadi,  
 With false conceit imagining how she  
 Did fall in love with him at her first sight.  
 "Extending away upon the frisking fish,  
 Disdaining full-blown, lovely lotus still  
 In windless weather, driving off the sharp,  
 Long shafts of the love-god, winning o'er the flash  
 Of first monsoon-lightnings, her eyes decoyed  
 My mind the while she look'd at me and fell  
 Headlong in love which she could hardly hide.  
 E'en though her mind admired me and was charm'd,  
 If she did not make plain her heart to me,  
 It might be since she then was new, and her  
 Obstructive shyness sought to draw me more."  
 So fancying, and giving reins to mind  
 That galloped in the realms of rare romance,  
 The amorous fool now mused; "If phantom-like  
 She flashes in my view, 't would be a feast  
 Of sight; if opening eye she looks at me,  
 'T would be the body's nectar-bath. If she  
 With a smile speaks to me, 't would be the ears'  
 Elixir; if she acts to my delight,  
 'T would be the peak of bliss; if full of love  
 She does enjoy my person, it would be  
 This life's fulfilment." So, to Cupid's spell  
 He fell a victim, waiting for her sight.

Sudeshna then sent for the stewardess,  
 And well pretending thirst, she said: "Ah me !  
 I die of thirst, I need refreshing draught;  
 Our Keechaka has many tasteful drinks  
 At home: now let me see how quickly you  
 Can go and fetch here some good wine from him."  
 This hearing, Droupadi was griev'd at heart  
 And sweated from the shock; she now fell into  
 A dilemma; She shudder'd to go there  
 But could not disobey. Thus sore perplex'd,

She told the Queen: "Pray, send not me but some  
 One else to bring the wine; I undertook  
 To serve but honourably. This befits  
 Me not. With trust in virtue of your place,  
 E'en in my husbands' absence I'm content.  
 To shield their servants does behove the great,  
 But not t' expose to harm. Do you think right  
 To send me o'er to someone for some job?  
 Didn't I state at first my inability  
 For mean errands?" At this protest, the Queen  
 Did feel within her impropriety; but,  
 Concern'd for love-mad brother, she observed:  
 "Alas! how you me misunderstand;  
 As I desiring 't drink liked not to send  
 A menial servant, I requested you  
 To fetch it; But you feel it 'infra dig';  
 Does this bespeak your sweet affection, friend?  
 Is that another's place? Do not they all  
 Know you full well at heart? Since I saw you  
 I speak so well of you to ev'ryone."  
 Thus press'd in many ways, Draupadi felt  
 That to resist her further was no good.  
 With a hesitant and vacillating mind,  
 She now somehow consented to obey  
 Her mistress, who o'erjoy'd did hand to her  
 A golden bowl. With it she then moved on,  
 The picture of distress, the while she felt  
 Sudeshna's damn'd commission on the top  
 Of ear-piercing words of Keechaka,  
 Like so much salt that's strewn on a festering wound.  
 Thus griev'd she stagger'd, curs'd her fate,  
 Look'd round for help, deluged her face with tears,  
 Now taking heart that none would dare touch her.  
 Now sunk in deep despair of all refuge.  
 O'ercome with helplessness, her face turn'd pale;  
 O'erwhelm'd with fear, her tender body shook;  
 Oppressed with woe, falter'd in her gait;  
 Fatigued with nervous strain, her limbs perspired all o'er.  
 Thus shock'd and stunned, she nearly did collapse.  
 In that crisis her mind flew up to God  
 As sole panacea for all life's ills;  
 And so enthroning God within her heart,

She coming out espied the sun and bowed  
 And said unto herself: "If I am true  
 To Pandavas, protect me now, O Sun,  
 From harm by Keechaka." The sun much moved  
 By her heart's prayer, graciously engaged  
 Forthwith a mighty demon, her to guard.  
 And he unseen stood in the sky alert.  
 So Draupadi at last approach'd the house  
 Of Keechaka and enter'd as the deer  
 The tiger's den. He yearning all the while,  
 And now discerning her, felt thrill'd with hair  
 Erect; and wreath'd in smiles, advanced,  
 To greet her, showing off his ornaments  
 And trying to look fine. She briefly spoke:  
 "The Queen hath sent me for your drink to quench  
 Her thirst, Sir, please comply." Now, gazing full  
 Upon her face, he longingly replied:  
 "You seek to quench your mistress's thirst; myself  
 Her brother you see consumed with thirst  
 Which you alone by love's treatment can cure;  
 Should you not do this also ? Tell me, dear,  
 Denied your shining glance, my body burns;  
 Devoid of your speech, mine ears do ache;  
 Deprived of your approach, my heart does pine;  
 Without your blissful intercourse, I die.  
 Pray rule me as your slave, so this my life  
 Will be fulfill'd, and the love-god's aim achieved.  
 Why still hide you behind this bashfulness ?"

To these base words she paid a deaf ear; and quite  
 Unmoved, she calmly said; "Please send for wine.  
 The Queen awaits me; she resents delay.  
 I must at once return." Then he replied:  
 "I'll send Sudeshna wine through others; you  
 Enjoy this taste to your own heart's content.  
 And let me too drink in the fragrance of  
 Your lotus-face. Save me from the slaying shafts  
 Of the love-god. All my wealth in elephants,  
 Horses and chariots I bestow on you.  
 My precious jewellery, fine palaces  
 And fair attendants I entrust to you;  
 And all my wives shall serve you; I myself  
 Will but your eye obey. Do you please."



So saying, he from rising passion's tide  
 Forgot himself and seized her hand; but she  
 Impell'd by might of watchful demon-guard,  
 Threw off his hand and rush'd out of his place.  
 Then, looking back, and finding Keechaka  
 Pursue her closely, she was seized with fear,  
 Not knowing where to go. Since King Virat  
 Then providentially was holding court,  
 She thither ran; and Keechaka inflamed  
 With lust, and drunk with pride, cared not for crowds.  
 All senses of secret and of public lost,  
 And like a mad elephant pursuing fast  
 A moving creeper, like a cruel fiend  
 Rushing t' assault an angel on the earth,  
 Like a horrid kite that swoops down to seize  
 A tender serpentess, like a mighty cat  
 That pounces on a tiny turtle-dove,  
 The 'Simhabala' caught her by the head  
 And hurl'd her down, the while her demon-guard  
 Fell'd him aground; now Keechaka, t' escape  
 From shame, got up at once, withdrew surprised,  
 And baulk'd thus, he like a cobra missing grip,  
 Was hissing hard with rage. Then Bhim who was  
 At court with Dharmaja, felt horrified  
 On seeing Draupadi's shame at the hands  
 Of haughty Keechaka. His eyes spark'd fire;  
 Limbs swell'd, sweat stream'd, teeth gnash'd, brows knit, and now,  
 As he would clang the earth with heav'n and dance,  
 As he would kick together mountains all,  
 As he would quite displace the seven seas  
 And smear his body with their thin, soft mud;  
 As he all the four cardinals would press  
 Into one mass and gulp the morsel down,  
 As he would strike and break all worlds in bits,  
 He look'd the figure of embodied Doom.  
 Then he enraged forgot their covenant,  
 And seeking to destroy damn'd Keechaka  
 And his related underling, the king,  
 He keenly eyed the near-by stalwart tree  
 And turn'd his crimson face to Dharmaja  
 Who with a warning glance stopped him and said:  
 "Why looks Valala upon this tree ?

Grow there not useless trees elsewhere ?  
 This fruitful tree does stretch its boughs afar,  
 Looks beautiful, and shelter gives to all  
 Who seek its shade. Why think of felling it  
 For fire-wood ?" So, with equivocal words  
 Did Dharmaja assuage his brother's ire.  
 What passed between the brothers was observ'd  
 By Draupadi. Like a tender creeper veil'd  
 With powder, was her body soil'd with dust;  
 Like fresh fragrance of "Champak," came hot breath  
 Out of her nostrils; like dew from lotus leaves  
 Fell tear drops from her eyes; like spots upon  
 The moon, the hair dishevell'd dimm'd her face,  
 So Draupadi, adorable to all,  
 Disgraced by Simhabala and forlorn,  
 Stood in the royal court.

From *Andhra Mahabharatamu*, 13th century

Tr. by G. V. Subbaramanya

O Sumati !

BADDENA

BADDENA (13th century) who belonged to the Chola Dynasty, is considered to be the author of *Sumati Shatakam* (Sumati Śatakam), one of the most popular poems of its kind in Telugu. Baddena's other work is *Neetishastramuktavali*, a treatise on ethics. *Sumati* means a good fellow and is an affectionate way of addressing the audience. The word is used here as a refrain also.

Six selected stanzas are given below:

To help one who has helped us  
 is no great virtue.  
 If we ponder, to help him who has done us harm  
 without the pointing-finger at him  
 is wisdom, O Sumati !

Sometimes boats carry carts  
 Just as carts carry boats.  
 Wealth and poverty, like the cart and the boat  
 swing and switch, Sumati !

You may seat the dog on a golden throne  
 and crown him at an auspicious moment,  
 would he forget his old self, Sumati ?

Just as the ant-hill  
 emerging after the patient toil of the ants  
 becomes the abode of fierce serpents,  
 the hoarding of hard-earned gold by the foolish farmer  
 will ultimately reach the hands of the kind, Sumati !

My anger is my foe;  
 my poise is my blessing;  
 my compassion my kin;  
 my joy is my heaven  
 my sorrow my hell, truly O Sumati !

To attend to unsolicited work,  
 to have intercourse with a wife without affection,  
 to engage oneself in an occupation not appreciated  
   by the king,  
 to be an uninvited guest at festive occasions  
 to nourish a half-hearted friendship:  
 these are all to be shunned, Sumati !

From *Sumati Shatakamu*, 13th century      Tr. by C. N. Srinath & T. V. Subba Rao

## The Ocean of Milk

### ERRAPRAGADA

Popularly known as Errana, ERRAPRAGADA (14th century) is the third of the poetic trinity who wrote *Andhra Maharatam*, the other two being Nannaya and Tikkana. He hailed from Nellore. He translated the Aranya Parva starting with chapter IV, verse 143. Among his other works are *Narasimhapuranam* and *Harivamsham*. The text of his *Ramayana* is not available today. He is believed to have been a source of inspiration for Potana.

The following passage is from *Narasimhapuranam*.

Wherefrom moon, the world-delighter,  
 rose like a drop of scum,  
 wherefrom great elephants like  
 the Airavata were delivered like crocodile-babes,  
 wherefrom beautiful trees divine  
 emerged like branches of moss,  
 wherefrom the mother of the world and wife of Vishnu  
 rose up like the figure of a gem,  
 wherefrom the primeval fish and the turtle  
 rambled like native beings there;  
 that ocean shines as the source of power,

the vast amazing deep sleeper;  
 be itself the ocean of salt  
 or ocean of sweetness, or ocean of nectar  
 (whatever be the name of that)  
 for all the great descriptive praise  
 the self is one for all oceans  
 (that is the ocean of milk)

Hence let me describe the pomp  
 of the ocean of milk, the wealth thereof,  
 as it's nothing but the Lord  
 of wealth, the Vishnu-form;  
 praising, feeling its features  
 are virtuous in themselves.

Now and then when cool rays pull  
 the waves of the ocean rise to the sky  
 surmounting the winged crafts  
 pure divine and rowed up there  
 all over, where fresh froth spread,  
 is the spectacle of the glowing clouds,  
 As though the ocean again and again  
 drunk with bliss and never dry  
 emits the nectar-rays,  
 pearls with a fresh new shine divine  
 are heaped at the banks by waves  
 which move with melodious sounds.

With coral-lips of right build-up  
 projecting (youthful) beauty tough  
 with froth-vest white all disturbed  
 on sand-bank-hips lovely round  
 with pearl-drops of sweat sprinkled  
 giving the high state of thrill  
 with excited fish-look-glows  
 moving, making delicate gaits  
 embracing the sea-shore girl  
 with the amorous arms of waves all around  
 glowing high in great love-play,  
 there comes along the ocean great  
 at the festival of moon-rise  
 piling up the sufferings of separation  
 during the nights all so long,

waters of the melting moon-stone<sup>1</sup>  
 from nearby hills streaming down  
 the rivers so made all at once  
 stooping over (all with love)  
 taking those over-flows full  
 as a delighted one he swells  
 the river-lord<sup>2</sup>, with passion strange.

The rows of coral trees on the shore  
 shine like abated flames of fire,  
 losing strength and smashed all through  
 hidden under ocean thrown out now  
 by wave-hands arrogant and vigorous  
 waving wave-hands up and down,  
 with loud-laughter-glow of the froth shining,  
 shaking the coral hair-locks off,  
 with the under-water-fire<sup>3</sup> as forehead-eye  
 the ocean looked like Shiva's angry dance.

Ever-fresh and swelling flowers  
 glowing creepers white all through  
 sea-shore-gardens please the sight  
 as though the nectar-sprinkle had stayed  
 from the churning days of early times  
 when gods made the mountain a churning-rod<sup>4</sup>

As though Indra envied him,  
 the ocean, for hiding its strength  
 with the wings of mountains  
 and intended to belittle him  
 and charged them to bend in groups  
 the crowded clouds came stooping down  
 to drink the waters all at a time.

The native home of Wealth-Goddess,  
 The bed-abode of lotus-eyed Vishnu,  
 The saree-dress of the earth-maiden,

---

1. Supposed to melt at the touch of moonlight.

2. The ocean is the husband of all rivers.

3. Badaba, the fire at the bottom of the ocean,

4. Referring to the churning of the ocean of milk for *amrit*.

The hiding shelter of the mountains,  
 The strong fort of Indra's demon foes,  
 The living place of the under-water-fire  
 The feeding place for all strong clouds,  
 The resonator of the moon-risings<sup>1</sup>  
 The goal of rules and miracle-store,  
 The source of all gem-stones fine,  
 The love-play-house for river-maidens,  
 The station of wealth and store of depth,  
 The shelter of the beauties all:  
 (To put it all in a nutshell)  
 Can even the Creator praise the ocean great ?

From *Narasimhapuranam*, 14th century

Tr. by P. Nagaraj

## Vyasa's Expulsion from Varanasi

### SHRINATHUDU

SHRINATHUDU (Śrīnāthuḍu, 1365-1445) is the most glorious legendary figure among the Telugu poets. He is often referred to as *kavisarvabhōma* or the emperor of poets. He was first patronized by the ministers of the Kondaveeti kings and then he shifted to Rajahmundry to receive the patronage of the minister of the king of that place. In the court of the Kondaveeti kings he lived as a court-scholar and officer in charge of education. He is known to have lived a life of aristocratic luxury and scholarly arrogance and to have commanded and demanded felicitations from different kings of that period.

He is famous for his extempore poems, which are quoted for their wit and resourcefulness. As is clear from some of them he saw both sides of life during his expeditions from place to place in search of patronage and experienced a very pathetic death in abject poverty during the reign of the Oddera kings who cruelly punished him for his inability to pay agricultural tax.

Historically he belonged to the age of transition from transcreation to independent composition. The works of this period are referred to as *kavyas*, a genre founded by Shrinatha, and the period as the *kavya*-epoch.

A significant feature of Shrinatha's poetic activity is its wide variety. He is known to have composed *Maruttharat-charitra*, *Shalivahana Saptashati*, *Shringaranaishadhamu*, *Bheemeshwara Puranamu* (Bhīmēśvara Purānamu) etc. Among them *Shringaranaishadhamu* is the transcreation of Shriharsha's famous *Naishadham*. It is an erotic work known for the exhibition of scholarship. *Bheemeshwara Puranamu* is a Sthalapurana, and is sometimes considered to be a

1. Referring to the tides.

Telugu rendering of a part of Skanda Purana. Some scholars believe that it is an independent composition by Shrinatha, later absorbed into Skanda Purana.

Shrinatha is known for his elegant composition of poems in a particular Telugu metre known as *Seesamu*, which has four long lines followed by a short metre, Tetageetr or Aataveladi. Shrinatha is famous as a Shringara poet and is popularly remembered as an *ahambhava* poet. Shrinatha's treatment of Sringana is not as one of the nine rasas but as the basic rasa which secures *rasatva* to all rasas.

*Bheemeshwara Puranamu* is the *sthalapurana* or local legend of a shrine of Shiva called Bheemeshwara located in the Godavari delta in Andhra Pradesh. This is the first *sthalapurana* independently composed in Telugu about a Telugu place. The following selection is from the episode of Vyasa leaving the shrine of Kashi or Varanasi because of a curse by Shiva, the Lord of Kashi. It expresses the nostalgia of an ascetic who had lived in Kashi for a long period.

Sage Agastya asks Vyasa, the great saint, the reason for leaving the holy town Kashi.

"O great saint,  
Your face turned pale,  
Your eyes reflect anxiety;  
Speak out the worry  
That troubles your inner peace.  
Hope you did not fall out

With Lolarka, the Sun God, in words of clash;  
Hope Lord Ganesha, the deity capable of  
removing obstacles, did not attack you;  
Hope Goddess Annapurna, goddess of food,  
did not forget your hunger at meal time;  
Hope God Kala Bhairava, the dog-shaped deity  
did not ill-treat you for no reason.

How could you leave the sandy banks of the divine Ganga,  
How could you leave such a holy place and cross  
so many miles,  
How could you leave the holy land that once entered  
none can leave,  
How could you leave the Lord of the Universe,  
Vishweshwara, who wears the crescent moon on his head.  
Do the boughs of jasmine  
My wife Lopamudra planted in the garden  
offer garlands to Lord Shiva and Kala Bhairava  
for decorating their heads?  
The divine Ganga who got the name Mandakini for her  
slow movement

The confluence of the three holy rivers—the Sangam—  
 The outskirts of Kashi, the inner town around the temple  
 The pure, radiant and auspicious form of the inner God Shiva;  
 All stand before my eyes as I think of sacred Kashi.  
 Under the moonlit sky at midnight,  
 On the sandy banks of the Ganga,  
 I used to sing of Lord Shiva, the Lord of Kashi,  
 The God with the tender moon on his crown,  
 Hiding poison in his throat to save the creation,  
 In a state of bliss and forgetfulness that is  
     evident through every pore of my being.  
 At the holy confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna-prayag—  
 I made intense penance standing on a single toe  
 To please Lord Shiva, the all-auspicious one.  
 Not even one stupid that entered the holy Kashi would  
     wish to leave it.  
 O wise and dutiful Sage Vyasa,  
 My surprise increases that you thought of leaving  
     Kashi at all.”

Vyasa, the son of Sage Parasara, explains the reason  
     for leaving Kashi to Agastya the destroyer of the  
     demon Vatapi:

“Great poets and saints Jaimini, Paila, Sumantha,  
 My disciples, famed for their generosity and tolerance  
 Started on a pilgrimage to holy places with me  
 And reached the holy Kashi to worship Lord Shiva.  
 What inauspicious thing it may be that crossed us  
 As we entered the town of Lord Shiva,  
 Who destroyed Manmadha, the God of Love,  
     with the fire of his third eye !  
 We had to suffer without food  
 For seven long days and were terrified of Kashi.  
 As we went from door to door asking for alms,  
 Not even a woman, devoted to good actions, gave  
 A spoonful of food with good will  
 In those days of starvation.  
 With the grace of Lord Shiva,  
 King Divodas, the mighty, protects Kashi  
 The land flourishes with wealth and plenty;  
 People stay relaxed under his stable rule;



But we suffered for want of food in such a place.  
 Tired was Vyshampayana,  
 Withered like a dry leaf was Sumantha,  
 Paila and Jaimini suffered great hardship,  
 Wept Devala in his heart of hearts,  
 Fatigued was Dalphya, his eyes wavered in weakness:  
 These saints, my disciples, suffered a lot  
 Tortured for long by the consuming hunger  
 For food from the brahmin streets of Kashi.  
 O Agastya, the victor over the great mountain range Vindhya,  
 In the temple town of Kashi  
 On the banks of the holy river, the Ganga,  
 My students suffered along with me  
 The great misery caused by hunger.  
 The result of not having a morsel of food for seven days.  
 On the eighth day at dawn  
 We woke up from our reed beds on the sands near the Ganga  
 And found the Sun spreading his vermilion rays  
 On the eastern hill, shining red and radiant,  
 Giving a sheen to the sky and making the clouds resplendent.  
 The Sun looked like a great golden bell  
 In the neck-chain of the elephant that  
 Symbolically seems to support the earth on the eastern side.  
 Bathed we in the Manikarnika Ghat as devotees of Shiva.  
 To wash off our accumulated sins  
 And worshipped the Shiva Lingas  
 The devotees made of sand on the riverside.  
 We offered flowers, incantations, and holy rice  
 Repeating the five-lettered mantra dear to Shiva.  
 We crossed the streets on the riverside thronged by  
 Saints and sages, and reached the inner streets with  
 Golden mansions and offered worship to Dunthi Vinayaka,  
 Kala Bhairava and Goddess Parvati.

Thus reached we the temple supreme of Lord Viswanatha, the Lord with  
 the odd eye who rules over the kingdom of liberation eternal, the God all-  
 merciful with his Benevolent looks, performed worship with the ritual of  
 circumambulation, prayer and offerings and sat at the four-pillared hall a  
 while.

It became midday and we went into the brahmin streets of Kashi for alms  
 with begging bowls.

To the unbearable fire of hunger inside,  
 Added was the pitiless heat of the midday Sun,  
 Creating a sensation of scorching in and around;  
 We moved from door to door only to receive  
 Insult and scorn and words of rejection at every threshold  
 but not alms.

I was wearied, tired, irritated and fatigued  
 Over the useless rotation around houses,  
 Faltered and stumbled in walk  
 That caused uncontrollable anger in me.  
 Blinded was I with the fire of hunger consuming me,  
 Blind was I with the fire of hunger consuming me,  
 Blind I was, as I failed to see from fatigue unbearable,  
 Hurling I my begging bowl with all my strength in wrath,  
 On a stone in a street of Kashi and broke it into a  
 hundred pieces.

In the view of my disciples, who remained mere  
 spectators with fear.

My anger did not subside even after,  
 My temples still trembled,  
 My brows remained knitted,  
 My forehead had sweat profuse.

What explanation could I offer, O Sage,  
 The beloved of Lopamudra !

For the meanness I exhibited that day  
 Like a man whose knowledge was bespoiled.

How did I fail to think that Lord Vishwanatha  
 was the Lord of all elements precious and high !

How could I fail to catch that the holy Ganga  
 originates from the lofty Himalayas !

Why did I fail to observe Lord Ganesha, with his moonlike  
 face and belly like a frog !

How could I fail to realise Kala Bhairava, the protector  
 of Kashi, in his naked form, shameless and commanding !

How it happened I could not tell,

That in anger I was ready to curse

The holy town Kashi, that is like heaven,

Granting salvation and blessings to all,

Taking the waters of the Ganga from my sacred jug.

With hands folded on their foreheads,

With request and prayer on lips,

My great disciples tried to appease my anger,

Showed the path of Dharma—yet one of them, unabated,

Made me withhold the water to curse.  
 The fatigue of imposed fasting for seven days  
 Enraged my hunger and anger alike,  
 I held in my hand the sacred jug of water  
 In the hand that wore the weed ring as the symbol of purity.  
 I was about to utter the curse:  
 May they remain ignorant of knowledge,  
 May they live deprived of wealth,  
 May they stand devoid of piety,  
 For three generations to come, those that live in Kashi !  
 How could I explain to you, O great Agastya,  
 My hand holding the sacred jug trembled,  
 Yet it did not stretch out to pour the water  
 To curse the holy Kashi.  
 At this juncture emerged there a woman of advanced years  
 With hair grey held in one hand and  
 Heavy round breasts, drooping with their own heaviness  
 Shaped like *Chakravaka* birds,  
 Whose movements made her slender waist shake.  
 The bracelets and bangles on her hands made sonorous sound  
 That was matched equally by the music of the anklets and  
     chains on her tender leaf-like feet, and toe rings.  
 She knocked at the threshold, and beckoned me to go near.  
 Her eyes were rivals to the symbol fish on the flag of  
     the God of Love,  
 So wide that they stretched into her hairline.  
 Her voice resembled the notes of the Veena in sweetness,  
 and requested me to abstain from uttering the curse.  
 Happy at last was I, I threw off the water  
 And approached her, with respect and adoration,  
 Who seemed an auspicious incarnation of all the qualities  
 Expounded as great in the Vedic lore and Upanishads.  
 Neither did I know her, nor her caste,  
 But I bowed to her with respect.  
 The heart knows the secret of  
 How to judge the superior traits of the person in front.  
 She asked me to come nearer and said:  
 "O Vyasa, son of a virgin,  
 Does it suit a sage like you to curse Kashi  
 For just missing food for a few days !  
 Don't you realise this is only a test  
 By Lord Shiva to reveal the purity of your soul ?

Or else, how is food scarce in Kashi ?  
 Haven't you heard that Goddess Parvati, the wide-eyed one,  
 Offers food, equal to nectar and milk, to visitors  
 That arrive all of a sudden at Kashi by noon  
 When with a golden spoon she serves plenty, honouring her guests  
 Kept away from food, for just seven days, O Sage,  
 Wept you like an ignoramus, losing equanimity,  
 Left, perhaps, your bravery and judgement, in your anger  
 If not, how dare you think of cursing holy Kashi,  
 The beloved of Lord Shiva, and cause her harm ?  
 Lord Shiva, who wears the crescent moon like a flower on his crown,  
 Treats Kashi, the town of towns, as his beloved wife,  
 Why this anger on her for a minor lapse ?  
 O Rishi, the adage, 'hunger makes one commit sin'  
 Stands justified in your case.  
 Brahmin as you are, I shall not find fault in you  
 But don't perpetuate your anger on Kashi.  
 Think of the irritation you may cause Lord Shiva,  
 Come along, I shall give you food, why delay with words !

'O Mother, your words are like honey and nectar to me,  
 At last I heard words sweet and pleasing in the town Kashi.  
 Equally hungry are we all, kindly tell me,  
 Shall I come alone for food or  
 Along with my disciples to accept your offer.  
 Generous lady—whatever you offer  
 We all shall share and save our lives.  
 We all suffer alike from hunger.  
 How can I come and save my life alone in shame ?'

The moon-faced lady wore a smile as soft as the  
 Full-blown lotus on her face and said:  
 'Come along with your students, after taking the holy  
 bath in the Ganga,  
 Calm and cool—I shall get food ready for you in the kitchen  
 So that you may feel pleased and satisfied.  
 The food I serve you there  
 Shall drive away your hunger and fatigue,  
 You suffered all these days in starvation.  
 Food, even the size of an areca-nut, was not offered to you.'

We went to the Ganga, bathed—and wore  
 The purified weed-rings, and came home to her mansion  
 Reciting vedas and sat in the front yard.

I sat on the white-washed twin platforms of her mansion  
 With my disciples, three hundred in number,  
 In the front yard of the great mansion  
 Of the lady who promised us food.

We sent word of our arrival to her through the devotees of Shiva who moved in and out. The lady came leaning on a young woman, her pan-bearer, whose figure looked like the bow of the Love-God. Our host came to us with the musical sound of her anklets and chains on her feet and two-rings and invited us and seated us in the dining hall divided into four parts on the four sides.

The ceiling of the dining place was covered by white cloth, pure and dazzling like moonlight. It was filled with the fragrant smoke of the burning incense. The smell of camphor came out from the designs on the floor. The walls enriched with precious, bright stones sent the fragrance of musk applied to them. In such a place she seated us according to our ages in the traditional manner.

Angelic woman laid before us plantain leaves  
 Golden yellow in colour, fully open,  
 Neither rough; nor torn,  
 New born, tender yet broad,  
 At the behest of our generous hostess.

Later

She offered us sandal paste and flowers and holy rice,  
 Incense fragrant, with its delicate smoke  
 Camphor she lit spreading freshness  
 In honour of the Brahmins, her guests.  
 'Bless the food, offer it to Lord Shiva.  
 Kindly be not in a hurry, while eating the nectar-like food.  
 The Lord of the Universe, the Lord of Kashi,  
 The Lord of Goddess Parvati, may be pleased with you !'

The lady, our hostess, stood in between the rows respectfully watching and sincerely praying to the brahmin guests. She requested us to sprinkle holy water around our leaf plates as preliminary ritual before commencing meal. At that moment Paila, Sumantha, Vyshampayana and I had some suspicions about the whole process.

Neither the sign of cooking, nor the smell of  
     spices nor smoke are present,  
 Neither the sound of preparations, nor the sound of  
     handling of the vessels is there,  
 The lady with her beautiful swan-like gait  
 May ask us to be satisfied with her sweet words alone,

Today also perhaps food is an illusion.  
 Her cool, mild look, her equanimity, sweet nature  
 and good sense,  
 Her openness, innocence and purity seem real, not  
 as pretension or fake,  
 Yet a look at the leaf plates makes  
 the heart miss a beat as nothing is seen on the plates.  
 Maybe, we have to swallow the bitter truth.  
 Instead of food, even today  
 As the banana leaves before us contain nothing  
 save a drop of ghee  
 This is like showing the moon  
 To make a baby swallow a bitter pill in the illusion  
 of tasting the moon.  
 True this is, she honoured us, offered holy rice and  
 sandal paste,  
 True this is she made us offer food to the Lord,  
 True this is she received our blessings,  
 Would the beautiful-eyed lady make all this an illusion ?  
 Today is totally different from the yesterdays,  
 We were invited, seated, supplied with leaf plates;  
 Graceful women sprinkled holy water  
 To the Gods on earth, to us, brahmins  
 Today is totally unlike yesterday.

'Have you offered holy water to commence meal ?  
 Kindly begin, let God bless you  
 It's already late, she pleaded  
 The lady of advanced years, with folded hands.  
 We held holy water in our palms, preliminary to commence the meal  
 On her request—Lo, the power of her words, at once  
 The empty banana leaves are full of preparations  
 of flour, varieties of rice and items of food in  
 six different tastes—before every man in every row  
 Pulses and items of flour in variety, rice and preparations  
 of milk and ghee in plenty,  
 Rice of the finest type, the fragrance of spices,  
 Special items of millet. The hungry Brahmins  
 Ate to their fill, to extinguish the fire of their hunger.  
 The holy men—vowed to silence and prayer—  
 Ate the meal to their full satisfaction,  
 Believed her to be none other than Annapurna,

The giver of food, the holy spouse of Lord Vishwanatha.  
 Sugar candy, juice of the grapes, bananas in bunches,  
 Cows' milk, fresh ghee, dal, unlimited in quantity,  
 Rice of the superior variety — we filled our bellies  
 To pacify the great consuming fire of hunger.  
 Everyone found the items of food they wished for  
 Appear the next moment before them, as much as they wanted.  
 What a wonder it is  
 That none has witnessed ever before in their lives.  
 Is she the *Kama Dhenu*, the Divine Cow who can  
     grant any wish?  
 Is she the *parusavedi* the magic stone that turns  
     everything into gold by touch?  
 Is she the *Kalpa Taru*, the divine tree that can bestow  
     any boon?  
 She moved hither and thither, with her clothes  
 Swaying to her speed, and the ankle-bells producing  
     musical sounds,  
 Serving food equal to nectar in taste, like Goddess Annapurna.  
 With flowing ghee, milk and sugar and sweet dishes.  
 Fine rice, grapes, milk of cows, pieces of  
 Sugarcane, plantains, coconuts, sweet water, curds as  
 White as moonlight in the season of autumn satisfied my disciples.

Vyshampayana was pleased, Sumantha was happy, Paila felt that it was  
 the result of his lifelong austerities to have tasted such food, Jaimini felt that  
 his life's desire was fulfilled, Devala was glad. Romaharshana was elated,  
 Suta was happily curious, and I felt that my mind's wish was granted.

We finished our lunch,  
 Washed our hands,  
 Relaxed on the pillared platform  
 In the centre of her grand mansion.  
 There emerged from the inner quarters  
 The Goddess whose face was as beautiful as the moon,  
     And the God with the crescent moon on his crown;  
 The Goddess with her heavy dark waves of hair,  
     The God whose throat is dark, reflecting the poison hidden there;  
 The Goddess with her eyes white and bright,  
     The God very fair all over the body;  
 The Goddess who can resurrect the love-god.  
     The God who burnt the love-god with the fire of his third eye;  
 The Goddess whose gait resembles the elephant in dignity,  
     The God who wears serpents as ear-rings;

The Goddess with the figure that can mesmerise all,  
 The God, the creator of the worlds;  
 The Goddess—the daughter of the holy Himalayas,  
 The God who is the Lord of the snowy peaks of Himalayas;  
 The Goddess lovely in form, of surpassing beauty.  
 The God, the Lord of Yogis, the wise;  
 Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva  
 Holding hands, arrived there, demurely  
 To take a stroll in quiet.  
 Wearing golden sandals studded with diamonds  
 None heralded them, neither Jaya nor Vijaya, the divine messengers,  
 The holy bull, the Lord's vehicle, did not walk in front,  
 The first couple, without fanfare, without announcement,  
 Arrived there, causing us wonder and surprise.  
 Goddess Parvati, looked the embodiment of kindness  
 Lord Vishwanath fully furious and angry.  
 I felt joy and worry—on seeing them thus  
 That elude words; I fail to explain, O Agastya !  
 Kashi, the holy town, was the beloved of Lord Shiva.  
 He was furious with me for cursing her,  
 Kashi was a rival to Parvati for sharing her Lord's love, another wife;  
 She was pleased with me for cursing her.

We arose from rest and made obeisance to them with hands tied over the chest and stayed aside. The Lord and Lady walked to the platform and sat down. Lord Shiva looked at me with eyes severe and red with anger and said:

O mean fellow with your gluttony, a shame to the name  
 of holy man, that lives only on a fist of rice  
 each day,  
 Son of a fisherwoman—Yojanagandhi,  
 Originator of the strange custom of a widow begetting  
 children from brother-in-law,  
 Your knowledge of the Vedas is a waste of study and years,  
 your authorship of the *Mahabharata* was a useless effort  
 of erudition,  
 How dare you to curse my beloved Kashi,  
 The thoroughfare to the salvation of the soul ?  
 You the uncouth, unconventional man,  
 Leave this place at once with your tribe.  
 If you still waver to leave Kashi,  
 I shall see your face filled with hard stone.  
 Your sin will not disappear so soon  
 For blaming Holy Kashi—O mean fellow."



So fast he spoke thus,  
The God with the moon on his crown,  
The words that no ear can bear,  
I fell at their feet and was about to leave Kashi.

'Fear not my son, I shall care for you in myriad ways,  
Go not elsewhere, but only to Daksharama gladly,  
Worship Lord Bheemeshwara with greater devotion  
Things auspicious alone will happen to you,' said Mother Parvati.

Though agitated in mind over the great anger of Lord Shiva, that can cause me havoc, I was consoled by the words of the Mother and felt relief. The Mother showered kindness and generosity through her eyes. I started for the holy place of Lord Bheemeshwara. O Sage Agastya, O great devotee of Lord Shiva, I wish that my heart's desire would be fulfilled without obstacles by meeting you now.

My fault was of the size of a mustard seed.  
I bore shame, the size of a great hill.  
The Lord ordered me out of Kashi;  
I lost all aim in my life.  
The Gods of Kashi are too kind to me,  
The heart of Kala Bhairava is equal to stone,  
Negligence is God Dunthi Ganesha,  
Kashi is unfit for men of our stock."

From *Bheemeshwara Puranam*, 14th-15th century

Tr. by P. Janaki Devi

## Orugallu (Warangal)

### VINUKONDA VALLABHARAYADU

VINUKONDA VALLABHARAYADU (Vinukonda Vallabharāyaḍu, 1380-1430) is known to be a contemporary of Shrinathudu. He is known chiefly for *Kridabhiramamu* (Kṛidābhīrāmamu). The authorship of the work is a matter of controversy.

*Kridabhiramamu* is composed on the mode of the Sanskrit *Premabhiramamu* of Rajpati Tripurantakudu. It belongs to the dramatic genre, a kind of one-act-play, *Veedhi*. *Veedhi* (Vidhi) is described as a play with bad, crude and immoral characters, especially involving an erotic affair. In *Kridabhiramamu* the hero is a sensualist brahmin youth called Govindamanohana Sharma, the heroine a young widow called Kamamanjari. The major part of the book consists of descriptions of the different corners of Orugallu (the present Warangal) town, and the people's

life in those places, as seen by this young man, while he roams through the streets of the town for the whole day before meeting his beloved secretly at a pre-arranged spot.

This work gained its significance for its detailed descriptions of the decadent culture of the medieval society.

Following are the descriptions of the warriors of the Palnadu as found on the royal roads of Warangal, and of the Ekavira temple in which the warriors offer their worship, and the folk narration of the story of Parashurama by a performer of the *bavanidu* community.

There began the move  
 Resembling the epic sojourn  
 Of the seven wonder worlds  
 The majestic fortified palace  
 Whose tall, infinite boundaries  
 Merge with the starlit sky,  
*Vankadara* glowing like the universe  
 Its huge gates resembled  
 The winged *Vindhya*

Govindasharma, with his dear friend  
 Entered the crowded city, amidst  
 The chariots, herds of horses  
 And elephants, moving at a processional speed.

After entering he approached a Komatishetty<sup>1</sup>  
 Whose name was Tittibha and

The crowded royal road  
 With hundreds of elephants  
 And warriors on the chariot  
 To avoid the crowd at the dust  
 Took to the quiet bylanes  
 Where plenty of pleasures frequent people  
 Especially the *Veshyavatika*<sup>2</sup>, the pleasure garden  
 With the love-god's den in the middle.

There one can get intoxicated  
 with pleasure of choicest women  
 Till noon, and then move on  
 To the other parts of the city

---

1. Business class

2. Colony of prostitutes

Tittibha agreed and followed him  
 Along the path beside the river;  
 The brahmin surveyed Palnadu, the land of the heroes,  
 The most sacred place where Shivalinga is consecrated.

i

### The Story of Warriors of Palnadu

There echoed the music with *Dhruvatala* <sup>1</sup>  
*Dhum, Dhum, Dhum*, in rhythmic beats  
 Rhymed in the style of couplets, to the pleasure  
 Of the youngsters, in an inspiring hand beat.

One roared and used *kola* <sup>2</sup>  
 Provokingly patting his thighs;  
 Another took to *ete*  
 Rolling his eyes fiercely;  
 Another took a ferocious posture  
 Beating his well-formed shoulders  
 Thumping the ground challengingly  
 And jumped around all over.  
 Each sang in tune with the other,  
 Playing the *dhola* <sup>3</sup>, the women  
 Singing inspiring songs  
 Eulogising the royal victory

Along with the family deity  
 Gurijala Gangamba and the friend,  
 Kalani Potulaiah, they were in all  
 A strong fifty-five, the warriors of Palnadu.

Aruvalli Nagamma's treachery,  
 The cockfights and the community dinners  
 Are amongst the few major reasons  
 That led to rivalry in the clan.

The youngsters applied the yellow sandalwood paste,  
 Akshata<sup>4</sup> on the forehead, bedecked with red flower garlands  
 The hair tied up in a knot, the tight dress  
 Around their waist, roaring to get into action.

---

1. Rhythm in Indian classical music

2. *Kola, Ete*, are weapons used in martial arts.

3. Percussion instrument.

4. Round mark dark red in colour.

Nallagonda, Nagarikallu  
Palleru, Naguleru are famous  
Prosperous places they all set to conquer

This is the place where all the heroes assembled  
To share the common goal and community dinner;  
This is the place where they lent their ears..

To skillful strategies of the lady, Nagamma.  
She was the one, who swore on her sincerity,  
Prepared to prove her purgation in a test of fire.  
This is the place where the step-children of a shepherd mother  
Fought with the royal race.

The wise heads of the village  
Relate the legend of the land,  
That five brave warriors  
Became martyrs at this place.

Meditating on the mercies of Macherla Chenna  
Of Shrigiri Linga, the benevolent protector  
Who blessed the villages with timely rains  
And wheat crop to thrive in rocky terrain.

It was a field day for heroes  
Who fought like intoxicated lions, like  
Lions in heat sexually aggressive,  
Challenged by the provocative female figures.

Vaisya Raja ! You are the one who is praised.  
The profound and the privileged  
Look at the ornamented plaque,  
On which all these deeds are engraved,  
These heroes will bless our endeavour, let us go on, they  
said, as they moved on, they encountered the temple of  
Ekavira, whose threshold was decorated with garlands of  
flowers and fresh neem shoots.

*ii*

**Ekavira**

We salute the mother of Vishnu  
Our respects to her, who has a snake for her hood;

We worship her with folded hands  
 Whose figure has Moon and Sun for her eyes;  
 We bow our heads to the Universal mother;  
 We pray to the beloved wife of Sage Jamadagni;  
 We hail her beautiful form.  
 Our homage to the daughter of the mighty mountain king !

She is ever young, with flowing tresses,  
 She is *Adishakti*, knowledge personified  
 Ekavira, her face glowing like the full moon.  
 I prostrate every day to her, the universal mother.  
 She the lotus-eyed, born in a clan  
 Praised for valour and restraint.  
 She shines like the jewel of the clan.  
 The lady blesses her devotees with  
 Prosperous longevity for their husbands  
 Till in the *Treta* and *Dwapara* yugas<sup>1</sup>  
 She made her beloved son<sup>2</sup>  
 Kill the kings, three-score and seven times.

She was there in Mandapaka  
 Penupaka, Mahura, Nagavaram  
 And in Polasa, all at the same time;  
 The same woman, Ekavira, who is Kakathamma.

She can cajole the mighty kings  
 And make them feel like children,  
 She has won over the great sage Jamadagni,  
 With her tantalising getures at Penupaka  
 She has mothered and instigated her son  
 Who swore to annihilate the Kshatriya clan,  
 She is yet simple who could mingle  
 He mellifluous voice, sing with womenfolk.

She protects the urchins  
 Who innocently play in the Gadulla Vagu<sup>3</sup>  
 She is part of the Polasa household  
 And is known popularly as Mahuramakka.

---

1. Mythological acons in Hindu era.

2. Parashurama, the son of Jamadagni and Renuka.

3. An intermittent flowing stream.

## iii

## Bavaneedu

With a base voice, filled with the right emotions,  
 Keeping in tune with shruti of the single string instrument  
 Singing in chaste *salava* style  
 Combining many ragas judiciously,  
 With a matching loud rhythm and bylanes  
 The famous Chakravarti of Bavaneedu  
 Stood before the idol of Ekavira Devi  
 And sang the glory of Parashurama,  
 With supporting musical instruments.

From *Kṛīḍabhirāmamu*, 14th-15th century

Tr. by Bhargavi P. Rao

## The Deliverance of the Elephant King

## BAMMERA POTANA

BAMMERA POTARAJU (Bammera Pōtarāju, 15th century), popularly known as Potana, has the distinction of being the only classical poet who is a household name for both scholars and commoners alike. He is believed to have been born in 1420. His place of birth is, according to some, the village Orugallu (the present Warangal) in Telangana and according to others Ontimitta in Rayalaseema.

There are several stories presenting him as a simple devotee of Lord Shri Rama, a farmer by occupation and brother-in-law of Shrinathudu, a flamboyant scholarly court-poet, etc. Potana, in fact, dedicated his work *Bhagavatamu* to Lord Shri Rama. The prefatory part of this work is evidence for his humble devotion to the Lord. But some scholars do not accept the idea of kinship between Srinathudu and Potana.

Potana is known mainly as the author of *Shrimadandhra Mahabhagavatamu* (S'rīmadāndhramahābhāgavatamu), a transcreation of Vyasa's *Bhagavatamahapurana*, one of his eighteen *mahapuranas*. Two other books *Bhoginidandakamu* and *Veerabhadra Vijayamu* are also attributed to him. But these two erotic and Shaivite books respectively do not match *Bhagavatamu* in style and hence their attribution to Potana seems unacceptable. Potana's *Bhagavatamu* is three times its original. Potana composed it as a book of devotion, whereas its original by Vyasa is considered a book of knowledge.

Minor portions of *Andhra Mahabhagavatamu* are authored by three other poets, who were disciples or followers of Potana.

Potana's poetry is known for its chastely simple style and nascent Telugu idiom. His verses are relished for their lucid flow rather than for carefully carved

craftsmanship. His poetry is considered to have set the model for devotional narrative poetry marked by lyrical quality, sonoric beauty and flooding emotionality.

Following the trend of experimentations with specific rasas and rasa combinations, prevalent in his days, Potana established Bhakti Rasa as the paripurnarasa, i.e., the only rasa in which all other rasas like shringara can find their fulfilment, on the lines of Madhusudanasarasvati's advaitic theory of bhakti as Paripurnarasa.

*Gajendramokshamu*, or the deliverance of the elephant king, is considered to be symbolically depicting the situation of an individual soul (elephant) caught by Maya the spiritual ignorance of illusion (crocodile) and the possibility of his liberation from this painful grip of worldliness with the help of Lord Vishnu's grace (chakra) provided that the soul cries in helplessness and agony for the helping hand of the Lord.

The following episode is from Skandha *viii*, verse 47-116.

Then, the leader of the herd of elephants filled his trunk with water, lifted it high in the sky, swirled it spraying the water with great force, as the alligators, crabs and mighty whales were hurled upwards, and they seemed to seek refuge with Pisces and Cancer in the zodiac, while the gods witnessed it in consternation.,

The mighty elephant in his sport looked like Mount Anjana with streams of water flowing down. He resembled the thousand-eyed Indra with a host of lotus flowers put on his back lovingly by his consorts. He seemed to be a golden mountain with the profuse pollen of lotuses covering his body. The elephant with lotus stalks all over him was like Shiva adorned with serpents. Also with white conch shells dropped on him by his loved ones, he was like a dark cloud laced with the gleam of lightning.

As the elephant sported in the water, the lake was violently shaken like a flower-soft maiden smothered in love, with lotuses, bees, birds and sand on the banks disturbed.

Then a crocodile surfaced from the lake, sprang up and held the elephant like Rahu<sup>1</sup> grasping the sun. the waves of the lake touched the sky with bubbles; the hissing of the crocodile frightened the alligators and crabs in the water. The swirl of its tail caused a huge whirlpool in the lake. As the waves dashed against the banks, the trees fell down by the force.

The elephant lashed at it with his trunk. The crocodile seemed to lose, but it swiftly grabbed the forelegs of the elephant.

The elephant began to sear his enemy with his sharp tusks wrenching the scales of the crocodile, while the latter tore the elephant with its sharp claws.

---

1. An evil shadow planet supposed to cause eclipses.

They fought on violently day and night without food and sleep. The scene was grim beyond description.

The herd of she-elephants could not move while their lord was involved in this gory conflict. Strong indeed is the bond that binds husband and wife !

The crocodile was in its natural habitat, fighting from inside the lake. Its strength was on the increase. The great elephant on the other hand was drained of its strength rapidly. He began to wane like the moon during the dark half of the month.

The crocodile attacked the elephant mercilessly battering his body, breaking his tusks and hurting him from head to foot.

The crocodile seemed to overtake the elephant swiftly like the thick dark illusion that envelops the little lamp of knowledge in the heart of an ordinary man.

It seized the feet of the elephant as firmly as a yogin who has established himself in the state of *Brahman* controlling the five senses and placing his intellect in a situation free from all worries.

The elephant trapped in water was in a pitiable condition, like a man inextricably lost in the meshes of illusion, doubtful of survival with its feet cruelly mashed by the fierce crocodile.

Yet the elephant fought the crocodile relentlessly with vigour for a thousand years.

At the end of the many long years of fight, the elephant realised the strength of his enemy and felt that it was impossible to defeat it. As wisdom dawned on him on account of the merit of his previous births, the elephant thought thus:

"How can I defeat it ? Which god shall I seek ? Whom shall I call on to help me ? Who will stop this ? Who can control it ? Are there no good souls who would take pity on a helpless one like me ?

"O God ! Why did I come this side in the hope of getting water away from the comforting shade of sandal trees which were nursed by the rich flow of my ichor, having lived for long in the forest as the leader of a huge herd of elephants ?

"I seek refuge in the self-manifesting God, who is all in all , the sole Lord, the cause of all, the one without beginning, middle and end, by whom this world is brought forth, in whom it lies dissolved, and in whom at the end it rests.

"In my mind I pray to the one perfect *Atman*, who is witness to all, who is both creation and destruction, manifesting and destroying the world by



turns.

"I pray to the one who shines beyond the impenetrable darkness that prevails in the total annihilation of the worlds, their lords and the beings that live in them.

"I praise the one who plays different roles like a dancer, whose nature even the sages and gods could not praise enough, and whom others can never know.

"My only refuge is the one whose divine feet the holy ones, the compassionate sages free from all bonds, eager to find the Lord, serve in austerity and devotion.

"I bow in salutation to him who, though free from birth, sin, form, action and attributes, assumes all these to deploy and destroy the worlds out of his own illusion.

"I bow to him the peaceful one  
the one who knows the real delight of salvation  
the one who grants salvation,  
the unique, the terrible, the Great Secret,  
the pleasant, the embodiment of knowledge and  
the Seer of all senses."

"I bow in salutation to the great Lord of limitless power, the creator, the one in bright form and the formless, the strange one, the witness, the self, the effulgent and the transcendent soul, holy beyond the power of word and mind, easy of access to those of *Sattvic* disposition,

the one beyond the mortal vision  
the one who inheres all,  
the compassionate one,  
the cause of all, the substratum of all,  
the one who moves all senses,  
the one who ends all misery,  
the one who shines beyond the cover of illusion,  
the uncaused cause of all,  
the immense one."

"I meditate on him whom the sinless Yogins find  
in their illumined minds.

I bow to him whose form is salvation,  
who is the meeting point of all scriptures,  
of all forms of worship,  
who is the fire of knowledge hidden within,

who has all the virtues in him,  
 who is hidden in all,  
 like the sacred fire in the logs of wood,  
 the blessed light that shines on its own,  
 whose mind is cleansed of the triple qualities,  
 the one realised by those who have sacrificed for him,  
 the one who has saved from all sin the helpless ones like me,  
 the soul of all, the indivisible one  
 beyond those who are lost in the love of mundane things."

"I praise the one  
     the Great Lord  
     the First cause  
     the unmanifest  
     the goal of spiritual quest  
     the perfect  
     the beyond  
     the Absolute

Whom the wise serve, free from desires and the love of money  
 and attain to the good,  
 the one who gives those desire, the imperishable place,  
 the one on whom the sages meditate,  
 the one whom the selfless devotees adore in ecstasy."

Then he began to reason out thus:

"I think of the Lord who is all in all,  
 who is beyond the categories of man and woman  
     bird and beast or divine beings,  
 who is beyond the limits of all *Karmic* attributes  
 who displays and withdraws  
 the worlds of name and form with  
 myriad creatures big and small  
 by his own power  
 like fire that burns and  
     spreads and subsides  
 like the sun that shines far  
     and wide and fades."

"They say that he is  
 with the meek and the weak,  
 with the Yogins here, there and everywhere,  
 I am not sure though,  
 If he is there or not.

Will he not hear  
 will he not see  
 will he not care  
 will he not dispel  
     my doubts ?

the one who has neither being nor non-being  
 the one who saves the good and the wicked  
 the one who helps those who look to him  
 the one who pities even the fake devotees  
 the one who is in all forms  
 the one who has neither beginning, nor middle nor end  
 the one who loves to be with the helpless devotees.

I adore the creator of all  
 who is above all, the soul of all,  
 who knows all,  
 who is the world, not the world,  
 who is eternal, who has no birth,  
 who is the Supreme Lord, the liberator."

The elephant king in his mind conceived  
 the presence of the Lord and said thus:

"O Lord, come,  
 Save me, O generous one,  
 Protect me, auspicious one,  
 I have no strength at all,  
 I have lost my confidence,  
 Life is shaken,  
 the senses are blunted,  
 my body is tired,  
 I cannot even stand,  
 I do not know anybody else,  
 Forgive me who am meek and weak,  
 O ocean of compassion,  
 they say that you hear what the living beings say,  
 that you go to the most inaccessible places,  
 that you respond to those who cry for help  
 That you see everything  
 But now I begin to doubt all this.

Lord of Lakshmi  
 Generous one  
 Beyond friend and foe

Praised by the Poets and the Yogins  
 Most virtuous one  
 Benefactor of the gods who seek refuge in you  
 Drawn to the sages,  
 Blameless one,  
 Come, take pity on me,  
 Be kind to me,  
 Save me who has sought refuge in you."

At the time when the elephant king said this and began to pray looking heavenwards helplessly in great anxiety that the Lord might come to protect him who is in peril. . . .

Brahma and other gods of limited range heard his cry but they could not do anything. Lord Vishnu, who is everywhere, who is victorious, decided to protect his devotee.

Far away in the city of Vaikuntha,  
 in the inner palace  
 in the private chambers  
 near the *Mandara* Garden  
 close to the lake of nectar  
 on the lotus couch  
 spread on the moonstones  
 enjoying the playful company of Lakshmi,  
 the one who is compassionate to those in distress,  
 heard the wailing of the helpless elephant-king  
 and then in great haste. . . .

He would not tell Lakshmi his consort  
 He would not also let her mantle go  
 He cares not to bear the conch and the disc  
 He would not ask the men-in-waiting to follow  
 He would not even harness Garuda  
 In his anxiety to save the life of the elephant.

While thus Narayana who lives in the lotus-like heart of every living being, who is ever keen on protecting the devotees, having heard the helpless cry of the elephant king, stopped his playful games with Lakshmi, considered for a while with great concern, resolved to save the elephant, looked at his disc proceeded on his way up in the sky. . . .

~Him followed Lakshmi, the women of the palace accompanied her,  
 ~close on their heels was Garuda,

very close to him were the bow, the mace,  
 conch and disc, Narada, Vishvaksena  
 — all those young and old of Vaikuntha came in train.

Lakshmi whose mantle was still in his hand  
 followed him as the bees swarmed  
 around her lotus-like face

He would not reveal the place he was going to,  
 Did he hear the anguished cry of an orphaned woman ?  
 Did the wicked thieves steal the Vedas ?  
 Did the demons lay siege to the city of Gods ?  
 Did the arrogant ones challenge the devotees to  
 show them the Lord ?

Lakshmi followed him  
 with the ear-rings dangling  
 with the long hair flowing down her shoulders  
 with the waist-band loosening  
 with the sandal paste washed clean by the sweat  
 on her face  
 As the mantle got stuck in the loved-one's hand,  
 with the light of a million moons  
 with the waist slightly bent by the weight of her breasts

She wants to ask him where he wanted to go  
 She fears that he might ask her not to follow  
 She moves on timidly and in confusion.

The bees mistake her face for a lotus and swarm around  
 When she wards them off, the Parrots swoop in  
 mistaking her lips for the *Bimba* fruit  
 when she drives them away, the fish from the river *Mandakini*  
 greet her eyes mistaking them for their own kin,  
 as she leaves them, the lightnings dazzle to rival her light  
 When she controls them, the *Chakravaka* birds come to  
 compete with her breasts  
 As she followed the cloud-dark-one like lightning.

As he proceeded in the sky  
 Gods in heaven saw Vishnu  
 who ends the prosperity of the enemies of Gods  
 who is full of compassion  
 who lives in the hearts of Yogins

who bears everything  
 who enhances the glory of the devotees  
 who serves Lakshmi in Love  
 the victorious one,  
 the resplendent one,

Thus as they saw

Gods then bowed to him with the words "*Namo Narayanaya*"  
 saying, the Great Hari is there,  
 by his side you see Lakshmi  
 that is the sound of Conch  
 that is his disc  
 that is Guruda there  
 he has come surely,  
 then they praised him who has come to set the elephant free.

Lost in the endeavour to save the elephant, he did not even accept the greetings of the gods, swift as thought he reached the deep and turbulent lake which was full of huge crocodiles, crabs, fish, tortoises and lotuses.

Hari in great compassion  
 sent his disc to kill the crocodile  
 the disc that shook the earth in its speed  
 whiter than the sky  
 with its brilliant sparks;  
 it moves freely through all the worlds.

When it was sent thus

It entered swiftly like the rays of the Sun that open the lotuses, and stirred the lake violently and reached the place where the wicked crocodile hid.

It severed quickly the head of the crocodile which was as huge as Mount Meru, which scared the herd of elephants, which was the centre of Lust and Anger, which delighted in spilling the blood of the elephant, which was strong and tireless, seeking victory.

When in a moment the disc chopped  
 the head of the crocodile. . . .

A crocodile entered the sun  
 Another crocodile reached the place of Kubera,  
 the other crocodiles that live in the ocean  
 went to seek refuge with the Tortoise that supports the earth.

When freed from the grasp of the crocodile, the elephant-king bathed in the flow of nectar sent down on him by the she-elephants stationed in the eight quarters, shone in beauty like the moon that came out of the dark, like the one with a detached mind who shunned the misery of the world.

Hari blew the divine conch *Panchajanya* which overpowered Indra and other kings by its effulgence, which shook the five elements by its loud sound, which defeated all the enemies.

From *Andhra Mahabhagavatamu*, 15th century

Tr. by S. Laxmana Murthy

## Devotional Songs

### ANNAMACHARYULU

Annamayya is the short name with which TALLAPAKA ANNAMACHARYULU (Tāllapāka Annamācāryulu, 1424-1503) is popularly referred to. He is the earliest poet-singer in South Indian languages who composed devotional songs called *padas* or *Sankirtanas* with the structure of *pallavi* (refrain stanza) and *charanam* (core stanza). Annamayya is said to have composed 32,000 songs devoted to Lord Venkateswara, the principal deity at the famous hill shrine of Tirumala, near Tirupati. Of these, around 6,000 are available today. Annamayya set the model for all the later devotional poet-singers and he is referred to as *Padakavitapitamahudu* (grandfather or creator of padam poetry) and *Sankeertanacharyudu*. He has also composed *Sankeertanalakshanam* in Sanskrit, codifying the characteristics of Sankeertanas. Sankeertanas are suited both for solo and group singing. This is the genre in which musical and literary elements are equally balanced. He has employed numerous Telugu folk song types in composing his lyrics and set them to classical ragas. A large variety of real life situations entwined with the fantastic are reflected in his songs. Several kinds of feelings of devotion like Madhura and Vairagya (ascetic) are found in these songs.

Six of his devotional songs are given below:

#### 1

How do you envisage  
the dispersed specks of musk  
on the shoot-like tender lip of the lady, O maids ?

Could it be  
the missive addressed to her lord  
by the irate lady-love ?

How do you account then for  
the dainty looks of the pretty lady  
turning so red, O maids ?

Could it be  
that her dart-like glances  
when plucked out forcibly from her passionate lover  
were stained with blood ?

How do you compare, O maids,  
the sheen on her comely breasts  
shining through her upper vesture ?

Could it be  
the festival moon-light that spreads  
from the crescent-shaped love-marks  
etched on them  
by her lover in amorous gay abandon ? !

How do you fancy  
the lady's cheeks  
adorned as if  
with elegant ear-drops of pearls ?

Could they be  
the lovely droplets of sweat  
that swelled on her lotus cheeks  
during the amorous play with her impetuous love-lord  
Shri Venkatapati ?

2

In moments of hunger  
or of weariness  
the facile name of Hari is  
the only refuge;  
there is no other protection.

In times of inadequacy  
or of excommunication  
or of incarceration  
the graceful name of Hari is  
the lone refuge;  
much as unaware one might be,  
there is no other way.



When calamity befalls  
or scandal stares;  
in moments of guilt  
or of dismay;  
the lone name of Hari  
howsoever uttered,  
is the only refuge—  
save this,  
much as one may strive  
there is no other way.

When fettered in chains  
or sentenced to death  
or when cunning usurers dun;  
the name of Venkatesha is  
the lone mean of liberation—  
save this,  
much as one may stupidly endeavour,  
there is no other way.

## 3

There she dances, Alamelumanga,  
as flowerets gently fall  
and the ringlets on her forehead sway.

As dames shower their praise on her,  
Alamelumanga,  
from behind the half-drawn curtain,  
shedding her half-blossomed elegance,  
enchanted Hari  
with her rare dance,  
a pirouette.

With rhythmic gesticulations  
and the jingles of the toe-rings,  
stamping the dancing feet  
lo ! she sprang,  
Alamelumanga,  
splashing in all directions  
the glow of her gorgeous diamond anklets.

In tune with the beat  
of *chindu* rhymes,  
and the play of youthful pranks;  
and the sonorous sounds  
of the anklet bells,  
Alamelumanga,  
twirls elegantly in dance  
to the relish of the Lord of Shri Venkatadri.

4

Say with gusto ! Say it again,  
Encore ! Hurrah ! Encore !

The Supreme Creator is one  
and the ultimate reality is one,  
it is one, and it is one.

There are no distinctions  
of high and low  
in this creation;  
Hari is the immanent spirit  
in all beings;  
all creatures are alike  
in this creation;  
Hari is the immanent spirit.  
The comfort of sleep  
of the king  
is the same as that of his servitor  
nearby;  
same is the plateau  
where the brahmin  
treads .  
and the low land  
where the despised untouchable  
dwells.

The carnal pleasure  
of the loving celestials  
is all the same  
as that of the beasts or insects;  
Days and nights again  
are the same.  
both to the affluent  
and the poor.

Hunger is the same to one who takes dainty dishes  
and to the one  
who devours filthy food;  
it is the same draft that blows  
on spots of fetor  
and places of fragrance.

The sun that shines  
on the elephants and the mongrel  
is the same;  
the merciful name of Shri Venkateshwara  
is again the same  
that guards the sinners  
and the virtuous equally.

## 5

Whoever thinks of you in whatever manner  
so you, to them O Lord ! appear;  
this on inquiry is manifest;  
as the pancake depends on the flour available.

The Vaishnavites passionately,  
worship you as Vishnu;  
the Vedantins call you the ultimate;  
pious Shaivites and their followers  
consider you as Shiva;  
and Kapalikas  
happily praise you as Adibhairava.  
The Shakteyas  
equally count upon you  
as a form of Shakti;  
and the Darshanas  
adore you variously  
according to their own perceptions;  
you appear small  
to the small and shallow minds;  
and to those who think high of you  
you are mighty.

There is no wanting  
from your side  
for, you are the lotus  
that expands or shrinks  
depending on the water in store.  
In the wells  
dug on the banks of the Ganga,  
would not the same water swell ?

O Venkatapati !  
you are our guardian-angel;  
I take refuge in you  
and this to me  
is the ultimate.

6

The hand  
that assures intrepidity to all  
is this dainty golden hand.

This was the hand  
that trailed and salvaged  
the priceless Vedas;  
and the one  
that propped up the churning knoll;  
this was the hand  
that had hugged the maiden Earth;  
and the one  
which had the pliant sharp finger nails.

This was the rapacious hand  
that begged for alms from Bali;  
and the one  
that gifted the land in abundance;  
this was the hand  
that restrained the Ocean  
by shooting an arrow;  
and the one  
that carried the plough.  
This was the hand  
that had spoilt the honour  
of the town's maids;  
and the mighty one  
that rode the Horse;  
It is this hand  
that rules over Venkatadri  
showing the path of salvation  
to all living beings.

## Seduction

### ALLASANI PEDDANA

ALLASANI PEDDANA (Allasāni Peddana, 1470-1535) is the most prominent and the most venerated among the *Ashtadiggajas*, the court-poets of the Vijayanagara king Shri Krishnadevarayalu. He is the elderly confidante and the intimate literary friend of that king-poet. Krishnadevarayalu is said to have once carried the palanquin in which Peddana sat on his shoulders.

The main source of Peddana's fame is his trend-setting work *Svarochishamanusambhavam*, popularly known as *Manucharitramu* (Manucaritramu). This work was the model for several Telugu literary works of the sixteenth century which are categorized as *prabandhas* by the 20th-century Telugu critics. He is said to have composed another Telugu *kavya* called *Harikathasaramu* which is not available today.

Peddana, taking the cue from Sanskrit *kavyas* like Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam* chose a small episode from *Markandeya Puranam* as the plot and elaborated it into a descriptive, ornamented *kavya*. Almost all the later sixteenth century poets followed this model. Prabandha poets chose the *alankara* and *Vakrokti* schools of Sanskrit poetics as their literary philosophy. Peddana, as the beginner of this trend, demonstrated how an *alankara*-based and *vakrokti*-oriented *kavya* could be structured. Within the *alankara* school, Peddana accepted the theory of *Upama* or simile as the source of all other *alankaras* and implemented this theory in his work by giving prominence to *Upama*. We can find good examples for both *Prakarana Vakrata* and *Prabandha Vakrata* in Peddana's work.

He is given the title of *Andhra Kavitaipitamaha* or grandfather or creator of Telugu poetry, as he began the new type of Telugu *kavyas* which are considered to be the first original and independent poetic compositions, in contrast to the earlier translations and transcreations in Telugu.

*Manucharitramu* is the story of the birth of *Svarochishamanu*. The poem covers a story of three generations. Svarochishamanu is the son of king Svarochi, who is the son of a celestial woman called Varudhini, and a Gandharva or celestial musician. The Gandharva has cheated her into making love with him by assuming the form of Pravara, whom she loves. Pravara is a devout Brahmin householder, worshipping Agni the fire-god strictly according to Vedic tradition. Once he receives a magic foot-paste from a sage and with the power of that paste reaches Himalayas within the wink of an eye. He gets lost in enjoying the beauty of the ice mountains; meanwhile the paste on his feet gets melted. Searching for his way home, he comes across Varudhini, who falls in love with him. She frankly expresses her love for him and makes advances towards him. Pravara tells her about his strict commitment towards his wife, home and his traditional rites, and rejects her love. With the help of the fire-god he reaches home.

The conversation between Varudhini and Pravara (Canto II, Verses 24-76) given below is one of the most popular episodes in Telugu literature. Its theme is the conflict between pure sensuality and austere morality.

And then wafted in the wind a  
Delicious perfume of a woman's  
Fragrant mouthful betel-leaf musk  
Mixed with camphor and flowers.

Sensing in the breeze human habitation  
Pravara saw a lightning-like body  
Lotus-eyed, moon-faced, wild bee-braided  
Dove-breasted lady with a deep navel.  
Sitting was she on the pial round a sweet mango tree  
At her house built all in gems and pearls—  
Like an angel when the wind was blowing cool.

Glowing red was her lower garment covering large loins  
Caressing all around a transparent white muslin  
Sat she on a moon-white platform burning red  
Playing on the veena with delicate fingers  
The notes conjoining her sweet song  
The round knobs of the veena pressing her full breasts  
The bells of her bangles rhyming with the strings  
Half-closed were her eyes lost in the melody  
As in the ecstasy of coition.

Alone was she angel-like playing on the veena  
When came sudden someone superior to Nalakubara  
And she opened her eyes flinging garlands of lotuses  
As her nipples rose up much in sensual trance.

Her looks stuck to the ocean of milk that stood before her,  
She sprang up with tinkling anklets of her lotus feet  
Gathered her breasts, hair, waist-line and  
Stalked leaning against the mango tree.

Her eyes, like petals, fluttered at his moon sheen  
Wide-eyed at the shape of the handsome sire,  
Eye-lids flapped in the quiver of desire  
As he approached her creeper-like body-line.

Felt she a trepidation at a second glance  
 A tingling thrill of passion burning her flesh  
 Smoke of sensuality burning through every pore.

Wide were her eyes reaching beyond the eye-brows  
 So the god of love drew a line of sweat  
 Wetting the musk-dot making her cheeks rough.

Angels neither wink nor sweat;  
 Yet, like an insect turning into butterfly,  
 Looking at the mortal,  
 Her eyes shook strange in passion.

Struck by his sensuous shape,  
 The lotus-eyed said to herself:

"Wherefrom has come; This outlandish youth  
 Beats in beauty Nalakubara<sup>1</sup>, Chandra<sup>2</sup>,  
 Jayanta<sup>3</sup> Vasanta<sup>4</sup> Manmadha<sup>5</sup> and all;  
 How come a Brahmin looks so saucy?  
 How I wish him to be my slave in love!"  
 The man's lotus-eyes sprang from the fair  
 Waters of his face; his high shoulders  
 Jostle with his ears in pranks; his broad  
 Chest the throne of the love-god; his crimson  
 Feet contest tender red leaves, may be  
 Brahma's wet palm, reducing the heat of the sun  
 With the mud of Jambu river, must have  
 Given a touch of nectar to this man's complexion!  
 "Haven't I ever seen the most beautiful and  
 Youthful of all the host of Gandharvas?  
 None can compete with him!"

As day is darkened by darts of rain  
 Struck by the arrows of the god of love  
 She came off slowly from the spell and  
 Shamelessly stood in his way, her anklets jingling.

- 
1. Son of the god of wealth
  2. The moon-god
  3. Son of Lord Indra
  4. The god of spring
  5. The god of love

"Whoever could you be ? Deer-eyed in fright  
You wander in the forest all alone ? I'm Pravara,  
A Brahmin fond and foolish, I lost my way on this hill.  
Blessed be you, tell me now I get back to my city."

He having narrated his woeful story soulfully  
She, with her smiling eyes and shining ear-rings,.  
Seductive breasts and tantalising waist,  
Spoke to him from the corners of her lips.  
"What ! With such large eyes whoever should you ask ?  
Indra among brahmins ! Ah ! You want to move on the sly with  
Damsels seen alone: Know you not the  
Self-same way you came ? You guess, I'm game !  
Well, fearless are you in the loneliness of us both !

Suggestive of her sport, she spoke on:

"O ! Brahmin ! We are celestial maidens and no mortals.  
Sisters are we to goddess Lakshmi, born with the  
Crescent moon from the ocean of milk.  
We can melt even stones with our sweet tone  
Matching with the instruments' tune.  
By birth we've tasted the butter and cream  
Of the art and science of love-making.  
We fall for only the brave ones for their  
Great feats of *Aswamedha* and *Rajasuya*  
We hold court on the emerald lawns of the  
Golden Meru in the cool shades of Kalpa Vrikshas  
We dance in the courts of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara !

O ! Young Brahmin ! Varudhini is my name;  
Dear as my life are my hand maidens,  
The noble Ghritachi, Tilottama, Harini,  
Hema, Rambha and Shashirekha and all.  
These caves all resplendent with many a gem  
Day and night, these orchards forever  
Filled with the buzz of bees that go from  
Flower to flower lifted by the cool waves  
That float from the flow of Akasha Ganga,  
Are verily the haunt for a love-joint.

In the guise of a Brahmin you came with a bow  
Of flowers; as a guest be seated lovingly



In this gem-studded house of mine;  
Rest in my hospitality.

The burnished gold of your body is  
Brandished black by the sun at noon.  
Faded is your beauteous face under him.  
Pious soul, make my home holy with your stay."

"O ! Belle ! Thank you but take it that  
All that you wanted is granted; but stay I can't  
My staying or not is all but one;  
My soul is fulsome with the shower of your care.  
For God's sake, let me go for I've my own cares !

Noble lady ! Many a magic you know as angels  
To show me my way back home. Nothing  
Can match the magic of your will and pleasure.  
Mother, match me with my folk."  
And then Varudhini, smiling sardonic:

"O ! foot-loose Brahmin ! Wherefore do you prowl ?  
Your city, your home ? Why prattle ?  
Don't your huts match these caverns of ours  
Filled with gems, these sandal orchards, these  
Dunes of Ganga, these bowers of moon-light beams ?

Now let me unravel myself; my mind is set on you.  
Well, you may leave my passion in the cruel care of  
The love-god or if you so much as take pity  
Honour me by embracing me in the arbours  
Echoing the hum of honey-drunk bees in bliss."

"O ! Lotus-eyed one ! Is it fit to speak in passion  
To mate with Brahmins who deny themselves the  
Pleasures of the physique ? Is it right to forget  
The proper and the improper ?

Young lass ! I worship the Holy Fire-god in all piety,  
Both morn and eve offering prayers to Him,  
Deities and Brahmans. Aged are my parents  
Swithering in hunger and sorrow for my return,  
All my duties left undone for the day."

Varudhini, embittered, harangued saying:  
 "Why waste your vigour and vim in rituals ?  
 When would you enjoy yourself this world ?  
 Aren't all your rites meant after all for mating with us ?

"O ! Brahmin ! Lose yourself every day in  
 Making love to me; use all these as your own;  
 These fragrances, this camphor, fresh musk  
 From the deer, rose water, flowers and fruit  
 Soft silk, heady wine, stimulants of sex,  
 Precious stones, and me above all:

"As moon-light is wasted on a blind man,  
 The pleasure of sex with Gandharvas to you are in vain  
 Like an owl that can't see the light of the day  
 You crawl in the dark pit of a family !

"A maid fallen from the grace of the love-god  
 Her face cupped in her hands—  
 At the very odour of her lover  
 Melts like butter and runs into the light embrace  
 Of her fiancé; never shall you get such a  
 Bliss, no matter how many times you're born !

When the very heaven is on earth ready for the body,  
 Why postpone it to death with fasting and  
 Controlling the senses, why wear your heart out ?  
 Why worry the weary soul ?"

"Ah ! Woman ! Go in peace ! Thanks be to you  
 If only you can guide me home. You may  
 Ring true to a lusty swain, not me !

"A Brahmin overwhelmed by the love-god's arrows  
 Shall perish and lose the cherished bliss."

Varudhini was thus hurt by the curt words of Pravara besides the sharp incessant arrows shot by the love-god at her vital points; with vengeance she rose in effrontery with an effulgent body got by the effluence of youth challenging the very god of love having drunk the vintage wine of the Kalpa Vriksha, unmindful of touch or pinch; Pravara was at hand like honeycomb in a cassia tree; he being alone, gentleman, beautiful and not being rude, would yield to her, she thought; passion mixed with joy, she focussed her looks on

him through the corners of her eyes, adjusting her bun for no reason, pulling out the chains or pearls smeared with the fine dust of fragrant rouge from the depth of her breasts, scaling pearls with her fingernails, dropping her mantle with a flip or flap now and anon in the name of shaking off flower petals, signalling the handmaiden with her constricted eyebrows not to be anywhere near her, looking backwards every now and then, arresting them all with warnings, she walked up to Pravara and said:

"In whichever thing the mind finds fulfilment  
Wherever the senses blossom and satiate, there  
Rest and be motionless. Isn't this insight  
What you call the ultimate Bliss; *Ananda* as  
Brahman ? Pravara ! Wasn't this you read in the Vedas ?

Hearing her frivolent words, trying to provoke him  
To coitus, Pravara was averse, and filled with  
Shame and disgust, said:

"Such scholarship you hold, none else:  
Copulation alone is piety you shout;  
All other Dharmas come to grief;  
You teach the science of lust !  
May your tribe increase in this great wit !

Youngling ! How I wish you know the lasting joys of  
Heaven the God of Fire offers family men like me  
Who always pray to him offering  
Tinder, reed and flame ? Body is but a bubble !  
Pleasure is but a drop of honey on moustachio !"

Dumbfound, Varudhini lost a beat of her heart.  
All in a pucker, controlling tears of anguish,  
With looks fixed on him, in trembling voice she cried,  
"Alas ! Whichever man doesn't think cheap  
Of a woman coming on her own ?

"Much have I endured your neglect; do not put me to  
Torture any more; the gem of a woman that I'm, of the  
Tribe that doesn't age or wither; I can't suffer any more."  
The knot of her bodice came off  
The beat of her heart hastened  
Flowers from loosened braid were flung off  
Creeper-like her body quivered and in a

Deep din of desire fell she  
On him, hurrying for fruition.

The sheen of her bejewelled armpits  
Meeting the rise of her breasts  
Nipples stuck at his chest in a fit of tight hug  
Expectant lips for a kiss.  
He then crying, "Alas ! My God !"  
Pushed her off by her shoulders.  
Would a woman's wanton ways  
Lure a scholar's soul ?

Being pushed away she stood in shame and disarray,  
But rearranging her tresses came out full naked  
And with scorching looks started arraigning him.

"You, pitiless one ! Would woman bear such a push ?  
Look at this mark of your nail on my swelled bosom  
And how it hurts !" Her frivolous tears  
Streaking her breasts, she cried in melodious melancholy.

Most piteously she wept, her pearly tears  
Turning red, she spoke again in a sad note:

"Will all your meditation and contemplation  
Come to anything without a wee bit of pity ?  
What a waste all your study ?  
Is not giving yourself a good deed ?

Did your holy Brahmins dismiss Parashara for  
Taking the hand of Matsyagandhi, the fisherman's daughter ?  
Has the glory of Vaishwamitra gone down for  
His making love to Menaka, an outcaste ?  
Did they talk ill of Mandakarni the sage who  
Debauched with a band of fairy prostitutes ?  
Could they end the reign of Lord Indra for  
Mating with Ahalya on the sly ?  
Are you holier than all those holy ?  
Fed on water, air and leaves,  
Shielded in steel loin belts  
Weren't they all prisoners of sex in the  
Boudoirs of our fairy bodies ?  
Sinners in the name of saints !"  
Arraigned thus, speechless Pravara

Washed away the scent of musk rubbed on  
His chest by her embrace; sipped water thrice  
And performed ablutions to household gods.

"God of Agni ! Sire of Swaaha !  
All gods turn to your fire for their parts !  
The Vedas praise you as one of the forms of god."  
Pervade you all over the universe !  
You too have a holy family.  
Of all the three Great Fires  
Yours is the best of all—Fire of *Garhapatya* !

If I were truly in love with giving away,  
If I never did fail in your worship,  
If I had never wanted others' wives or wealth,  
Put me back at my home before sun-down  
Lest she put me to more shame !"

From *Manucharitramu*, 15th-16th century

Tr. by Vegunta Mohan Prasad

## Summer

### SHRI KRISHNADEVARAYALU

SHRI KRISHNADEVARAYALU (Śrī Krishnadēvarāyalu, 1487-1530) of the famous Tuluva dynasty who ruled over the Vijayanagar empire, is called Andhrabhoja in allusion to Bhoja, the great king-poet in Sanskrit. He is also referred to as *Sahitisamaranganasarvabhōma* or emperor in the fields of literature and war. As a king he patronised and inspired several poets to compose. He himself was an erudite scholar and a skilled poet in Telugu and Sanskrit and was a devout follower of Srivaishnava or Vishishtadvaita tradition of Vedanta. In Telugu he composed a *prabandha* by name *Vishnuchitteeyamu* which is popular under the name *Amuktamalyada* (Amuktamālyada). From the preface to this work, we come to know that he composed several Sanskrit works like *Madalasacharitra*, *Satyavadhoopreenanam*, *Sakalakathasara sangraham*, *Jnanachintamani* and *Rasamanjari*. But none of these works is available today.

*Amuktamalyada* has certain distinctly unique features and stands apart from the other *prabandhas*. Its story is not chosen from the puranas. It is the story of Andal or Godadevi who is considered by Shrivaisnavites to be a divine incarnation and one of the greatest devotees of Vishnu. It deals with Madhura Bhakti or devotion in the form of love unlike most other *prabandhas* which tell stories of Shringara or eros. The work also contains several devotional stories of the Vaishnavite tradition.

The piece given below (Canto II, stanzas 45-70) is the description of the hot

summer season from *Amuktamalyada*. Though the description appears to be only a part of Kavya convention, the skill of the poet lies in using it for creating the mood necessary for the narration following it. This description appears before story of a king of Madhura who gets converted into a Vaishnavite and becomes an ascetic. Summer reduces the erotic urge and thus leads to the ascetic mood.

Like the shapeliness of *patala* trees,  
Bringing in mirages in plenty,  
Like water in the season of showers,  
Bursting open pods of silk cotton,  
There emerged with a bang hot Summer.

Went dry the flow of wide streams,  
Surfaced huge cracks in boulders big,  
Shone the fields with water thrown by bird-catchers  
To entice the winged creatures  
Rose high the white ashes of leaves  
As trees were burnt by wild fires.  
The hawks pursued mistaking them for white pigeons.  
Shifted the slumbering travellers under trees  
As the shades quickly shifted  
Turned round and round like devotees making  
Prostrate salutations turning on their bellies, and backs.  
Livid grew the faces of the eight directions,  
Their very faces turned wan:  
The directions eight became yards  
For washermen to dry Bhairav's clothes  
The wide expanses, tempting mirages.

With caked mud on bodies, elephants,  
Boars and buffaloes of the wild  
Appeared like clay models.  
Lest extinction strike the species all  
The creator preserved their moulds.  
Using gods of the sea, the west wind and the scorching sun.  
The smoke of summer-related fires bringing darkness  
Arrays of sun's rays stealing their water wealth  
Goups of ruined wells hastening to complain  
Appear like straws eddying up,  
In whirlwinds of dust going up in circles.  
Reins of the sun's chariot loosen, the snakes

Rendered weak unable to eat the boiling hot rice  
Arun the charioteer slows down often  
At his master's behest to tighten them up  
And days become longer.

Sun-burst pods throw out wisps of silken cotton  
Rising high and dispersed.  
Like ashes of the sun-scorched world.

Reflected the powerful sun's rays in  
The little ponds dug up by thirsty travellers  
With their hands in the sands.  
Pearl strings they are worn by rivers  
The heat of separation to cool  
From their true lord, the sea deity,  
In the height of summer.

Looked up the lotuses in dried-up rivers  
Praying to the cloud-god, who earlier  
Brought together the rivers and their lord  
With coins of gold for an offering,  
Their ear studs shining, –  
Their upright stalks like hands,  
And bending petals like fingers.  
Knee-deep become the ponds for broods of cranes  
Their throats gone hoarse eating moss-creeper grain,  
Fascinated by the aroma of the fish scales,  
Slowly bending and stalking forward  
The cranes eat little fish and snails.  
Pulled by its leg by a crab  
Turn aside a crane picking up food  
With its beak.  
Wandering through lotuses and cork shrubs  
Move in rows the broods of cranes.  
Afraid of dogs, fall  
Crocodiles into wells, Crawl the  
Malugu fish into holes in the earth.

Exposed to heat, the bottoms of ponds show cracks.  
The fleshy fish devoured long ago,  
Rows of cranes make do with  
Smaller, mud-covered, even dead fish  
Discovered tangled in the roots of lotus.

Moistened by the *patala* flowers  
 Blown away again and again by the wind,  
 Gives out the land a rich perfume.  
 Singing the men working the waterlifts  
 Irrigating the fruit and flower trees.  
 The drumming sounds of the  
 Vessels dipped into the water  
 Provided the accompaniment.

Exposed to the rays of the sun ferocious  
 Exhausted look the jasmine shrubs,  
 The buds at the tips of their twigs  
 Appear like red blisters of fire.

For fear of total extinction dreadful,  
 The species to keep alive and preserve,  
 Watering the plants in the cool orchard  
 Appeared women resplendent,  
 Water falling in whirls their navels,  
 Lotuses their eyes, the moss their hair buns,  
 Breasts, beautiful lovebirds,  
 The dazzling foam, their smiles.

Given a fright by sultry summer  
 Withdraw the woman with luxuriant hair  
 The jasmines therein like the Ganga  
 The plaits like the Yamuna shining.  
 Demand they the pitchers drawing  
 Water from the vessels big to return  
 The beauty of their breasts they stole.  
 Looked at them the travellers, their eyes riveted  
 While the streams poured into their palms  
 The brightness of the lotus eyes  
 Waving their heads in appreciation subtle.  
 Open are their joined palms cup-like  
 Long after they had their fill of water,  
 The woman pouring knowing skilful smiles.  
 All the while collected his levy  
 The flower-arrowed god, stricken lame.

Calling them mother and sister in their thirst,  
 Having quenched it from the water poured out  
 Relieved were the wayfarers,



Continue they to drink looking at their  
Faces, breasts, armpits,  
Smile the women looking into their eyes  
Seeing the wayfarer as the god of love  
Trepidation just it was that made him  
Call them mother and sister.

Like steam rising from the frying pan  
As the flour was spread for the pancake  
The heat did not abate in the day.  
The thick moonlight in the night  
Appeared like thin pancakes  
Fried for the broods of the lovebirds' offspring.  
Proffering their hands all day in play  
In the pools of coolness dallying,  
With their hair still wet and fragrant  
With jasmine buds decking it,  
Embrace they their lovers, with nipples pressing.  
Exhaling sweet sighs having drunk coconut wine  
Clad in a thin cloth with the lady-love  
Lying on his chest  
Sends the lover signals with his thighs  
Dallying in love-play in the still moonlit dawn.

In sultry summer copulate couples  
Chest and breast just touching  
Communion of minds missing,  
The act limited to words, just empty  
Like the togetherness of boors.

Fatigued by torrid summer  
Retreated the love-god to the lower world  
Afraid of the hot sun  
Migrated the breezes.  
Stealing fragrance  
As lovers wave fans of *khus* roots  
The sweat on their ladies' faces to dry  
Medicinal herbs handed to their lord, the moon,  
The thieving breezes.

In such a fierce summer in Madhurapura  
The soft breezes from the mountains  
Become extinct, existing only in fiction.

By magic brought in as palm-leaf fans  
 Came the breezes once again.  
 Proof is it not of crafty magic.  
 Waving peacock-feather fans ?

Loosened the grip of the flower-arrowed god  
 The fierce summer intense with scorching heat  
 Fell the sugar-cane bow down on the earth.

Wells stricken dry with fear  
 Sank the water to the bottom.  
 Breasts of woman leaning on the ring of the well  
 The cool waters at the bottom rouse,  
 Not the knotted ropes.

Breeds summer jasmines and *patala* flowers  
 The ones that would cause the hair to fall,  
 And those that would help it grow,  
 Sisters both, like herbs of contrary efficacy  
 Bred in the self-same season.  
 Drink the sensuous aristocrats.

The water of coconuts tasty  
 Under the sands in gardens of dalliance kept  
 To cool, sweetening the sourness of  
 Burps caused by eating oil-fried fish.

Appeared cool the summer house trellised  
 By the rich in every village  
 Throwing coolness pleasantly around  
 Like lotuses on the stove that the earth turned into.

Sheltering in orchards during the hot day  
 Wearing jasmines in the hair,  
 Dressed in clothes washed clean,  
 Approach women to sugar-cane crushers  
 Like ants carrying the eggs of later rains  
 To taste the sweetness, yearning.

## O God of Kalahasti

DHURJATI

DHURJATI (Dhūrjati, 16th century) lived during the time of Shri Krisnadevarayalu. Whether he was his court-poet or not is not clear. He composed two works *Shrikalahastishwara Mahatmyamu* and *Shrikalahastishwara Satakamu* and dedicated them to the lord of Kalahasti. Shri Kalahati is a shrine of Lord Shiva close to Tirupati on the bank of the river Swarnamukhi. The name of the god and the place are said to have been after a spider (*Shri*), snake (*Kala*) and elephant (*Hasti*), which sacrificed their lives in their innocent and extreme devotion to Shiva. *Shrikalahastishwara Mahatmyamu* is the *kavya* form of the *Sthalapurana*, including this and many other stories of Shaivite devotees associated with this shrine.

The selected piece is from his other book *Shrikalahastishwara Shatakamu* (*Srikalahastishwara Satakamu*). A *Shatakam* is a collection of one hundred or one hundred and eight verses. *Shrikalahastishwara Shatakamu* is a *Vairagya shatakam* with the refrain *Shrikalahastishwara*. This *Shatakam* is a storehouse of Shaivite philosophy and ascetic feelings such as vexation from indulgence in and aversion for riches, pedantry and pomp. Six selected verses are given below:

1

My chest has been worn away  
by the breasts of women rubbing against it.  
My skin has been roughened  
with love scars from their nails.  
Lost in the straining of passion,  
youth is gone.  
My hair has started falling out,  
I'm sick of it all.  
I can't go on in this circling world.  
O God of Kalahasti, make me desireless.

2

Those kings drunk with power,  
serving him is like being in hell.  
The things they give you—women with eyes  
like lotuses, palanquins, horses, jewels—  
all breed pain.  
I've had enough of wanting them.  
O God of Kalahasti, through your grace  
change me so that I awaken  
to the wealth that is illumination.

3

Did the spider study the Vedas  
or the snake consult law books ?  
Did the elephant labour at spiritual disciplines  
or the hunter intone a mantra ?  
Can learning be the source  
of our awakening ?  
No ! to worship your feet  
with devotion,  
O God of Kalahasti,  
would be enough for everything  
that lives !

4

All of this is illusion, if you  
think about it  
and look !  
But even when a man does understand,  
he will always feel—  
“woman, sons, wealth, my body,  
these are facts !”  
And he wanders off  
into the ocean of cravings.  
Does he ever focus his thoughts  
to the tiny extent of a tamarind leaf  
on you who are supremely real,  
O God of Kalahasti ?

5

If you call a man a king, must he then  
say good-bye to compassion,  
charity, self-respect,  
the tolerance that learning can give,  
good-bye to speaking the truth  
and to helping scholars who have been his friends,  
to gentleness or recognising  
whatever others have done for him  
and good-bye to loyalty ?  
O God of Kalahasti,  
is there a reason why kings seem to be  
a growth from the worst seed ?

## 6

The water is the mood of emotion.  
 My flowers are arrangements of words.  
 My music is the resonance of lovely sounds.  
 The fine clothes are the figures of speech.  
 The lights are the radiance of the verses.  
 My offering is the sweet flowing of the poem.  
 And so I worship you  
 in the way I know how,  
 O God of Kalahasti,  
 performing a magnificent service  
 bright with devotion.

From *Shri Kalahastishwara Shatakamu*, 16th century

Tr. by Hank Heifetz &  
 Velcheru Narayana Rao

## The Episode of Nigamasharma

TENALI RAMAKRISHNA KAVI

TENALI RAMAKRISHNA KAVI (Tenāli Rāmakriṣṇa Kavi, 16th century) also known as Tenali Ramalingadu, is counted among the eight court-poets of King Shri Krishnadevaraya, although there is little historical evidence for it. In folklore he is known as a *vikatakavi*, a witty and mischievous poet. There are several folk tales about his witty intelligence as a confidant of Shri Krishnadevaraya. These stories run in the formula of the Bhoja-Kalidasa and Akbar-Birbal stories. He composed three kavyas, *Udbhataradhyacharitramu*, *Panduranga Mahatmyamu*. His most famous work is *Panduranga Mahatmyamu* (Pāduranga Māhātmyamu).

Along with the other Prabandha poets Ramakrishna Kavi chose the Vakrokti school of Sanskrit poetics as his poetic philosophy and like the other prabandha poets gave central place to alankaras.

The present selection (Canto III, verses 9-50) is a famous story from *Panduranga Mahatmyamu*. Like many other stories of the Bhakti cult, this story shows that an individual could attain a place in the world of the Lord just by his association with the Lord or his place or his name at the time of his death, however grossly immoral his earlier life might have been. Some scholars consider this story as reflecting the social milieu of the sixteenth century marked by the dilemma between the high fervour of devotion and extreme sensual indulgence.

Born of a family considered the seed of immense promise  
 Came he to be known as a granary of sacred lore,  
 The birth place of sciences diverse,

The forum and stage of arts various,  
 An ever-devout one named Sabhapati.  
 Grew he to renown in Pithikapura,  
 The ornament of Kalinga country famous,  
 The most brilliant among all Brahmins.  
 The devout lady, his pious wife,  
 Unremitting, soul-felt worship paid,  
 Bringing down deities from above,  
 And elevating the twice-born by her worship,  
 Blessed was she with a son resplendent.  
 Amorous deity was he to the hearts of young women  
 Well-behaved, upright and charity incarnate  
 In radiance comparable to the moon.  
 In the first flush of youth shone  
 His silk-soft moustache bright,  
 In garrulous talk was he unparalleled.  
 Came to be well-known by the appellation  
 Nigamasharma, which the devout father him gave.

O ! the mighty one who did penance great !  
 The making of Almighty it was  
 That though of a great lineage born,  
 Learned in all arts and sciences holy,  
 Came he to be drawn both in body and mind  
 Towards lust, the third of the four ends of life,  
 With hair washed well with water pure,  
 Clad in resplendent clothes of white,  
 Having eaten the best of rice cooked,  
 Wearing garlands of flowers fragrant  
 With sandal paste his person anointed  
 Camphor-smelling betel-leaves chewing,  
 Ornaments of rare gold wearing,  
 Went he about in the town's thoroughfares  
 Like a pearl washed clean again and again.  
 With his sacred thread gleaming on him  
 Rousing debate whether it is or not  
 Perfume-smeared, dhoti-end trailing the path,  
 Excessive betel juice giving lips a lurid red,  
 Neck like the conch of the love-god,  
 With nail-marks of pleasure-girls covered,  
 Wearing apparel dirtied by sleeping with women uncouth.

Getting along just calling himself a Brahmin  
Nigamasharma with a great show of pomp,  
Beaming shamelessly and laughing blatantly,  
Roamed the disreputable scamp.

Breasts of the wife faithful empty goblets,  
Those of the street women full goblets,  
The wedded caste-woman like the ill-omened fourth-day moon,  
The kept woman worth scanning and adoration wide.  
Unwilling was he to blow the fire of oblation,  
But sigh he would with the heat of the sweetheart's separation  
Incapable though to hold out palms devout obeisance to offer  
Fall he would at the feet of  
Jealous-eyed women for being unfaithful.  
Participate he wouldn't in discussions of matters holy,  
But in squabbles of lovers from dawn to dusk take part.  
Brook he wouldn't to drink  
The holy water from the sacred conch,  
But joyously would lick the honey of cheap women's lips,  
Refuse he would the sacred caste-marks to wear  
But willingly would suffer the depraved rake  
The nail-wounds of debauchees low.  
Like the species of ribbed gourd called gheegourd,  
Thought with nothing of ghee in it,  
Nigamasharma, called knowledgeable in scriptures  
A hollow appellation he came to prove.  
Wears he the sacred thread in vain  
Roaming about the streets like a vagrant,  
Mores, decencies and proprieties transgressing all.  
Falling down at first slowly,  
Fell he down lower and deeper,  
The admonitions of the preceptors unheeded,  
Discarded he even the cover of a twisted straw.  
Steeping himself in depravity bottomless,  
The wealth his grandsire and forefathers great  
Generations down like industrious ants gathered  
Falling into his hands, fell to ruin,  
Like the blood in one stung by a serpent.

Mortgaged he for his daily expenses dire,  
Things of value in the pawnbrokers' hand,  
His pious mother he fleeced taking sums available  
By stages he relieved of all her gold.

Sold everything that would fetch money  
 Borrowed at rates of interest ruinous high  
 Disposed of lands fertile right and left  
 To rakes, acquaintances and officers low.  
 O ! The most pious one among the devout !  
 Being one Kalinga-born stubborn  
 Like a vegetable that wouldn't wither at being shown with a finger  
 Stricken not was he with shame;  
 Crass and depraved fell he lower.  
 Borrowing and extracting from every source he could,  
 Approaching relatives for his carnal urges  
 Beyond all measure fell the shoddy wretch.  
 Carousing in houses of ill-repute,  
 Never coming home, burning the candle  
 Both ways earning money in thieving ways,  
 Sank Nigamasharma in foul depths never to rise.  
 Hounded and pestered by those who lent him money.  
 For breaking promises and jumping deadlines,  
 Suffering and ignominious he roamed about,  
 Avoiding the thoroughfares in the town,  
 Starving and feeble-voiced wretchedly,  
 Fallen from esteem wanders the rake,  
 Like musk evaporated, flowers faded,  
 Cooked rice gone stale and pond gone dry.  
 Looked he an ornament with stones bereft  
 The foul lecher fallen from esteem.

Meanwhile comes in one day  
 An elder sister, the daughter of the house,  
 With her man and children wise and fine,  
 Saying the fallen one would she discipline.

In this manner having come from her place about five or six yojanas away to her mother's house, having comforted and reassured her parents with many a cool sweet word in a skilful way, relieving them with generous and soothing gestures, attending to the family deity's devout service, organising daily worship and giving attention to guests, gathering the remnants of family fortune and keeping them in safe care, mingling among their wealth of cattle, children, servants and maids, removing their causes of discomfort and anxiety, taking care of the family collection of previous books through her husband's good offices, saving them from fire, decay and beggars, collecting together things that fell into disarray, setting the house in order, restoring it to its



original stature, identifying things that once belonged to them, consolidating whole villages of their ownership that had gone out of their hands due to carelessness, she was grieved and agonized to see her brother's youthful wife being fatigued, keeping the secret of their family while serving her in-laws to the best of her ability, the first flush of her youthful charms impossible to suppress but yet going to waste like moonlight in the wilderness. Suddenly finding her brother return at breakfast time from somewhere like a star from the firmament, showing joy at her sight with an effort and making a deep obeisance not knowing what else to do, the elder sister, having seen the cuts and nailmarks on his person by lascivious women, was disturbed, but in a little while collecting her wits, blessed her brother with subtle intention to become the bridegroom for the festive occasion of his wife in the family way. While she attempted going further, having noticed his dislike, put on a clever trellis of sweet soft words and proffering her little moon-faced kid to him and restraining him from leaving, said: "Where would you go now ? You'd dine with your brother-in-law and in a minute I would get the vegetables and dishes cooked." Thus stopping the erring youth she made a signal with her eyes to the young man's wife, her sister-in-law. At that quick sign of the eyes of the daughter of the house:

That devout wife, husband-adoring,  
Washed with waters cool and pure  
The blessed feet of her lord worshipful,  
Warm exhalations of her sighs deep  
Fanning the wetness dry.  
In a single trice to her beloved brother  
The elder sister served dishes like a feast,  
As to gods and those close  
Relatives great she would.  
Getting bathed clean in form and style,  
Giving him a freshly-laundered cloth to wear,  
Drying well the hair washed clean  
Decking it with flowers fresh,  
In love exceeding sandal paste smearing,  
Offered she to her brother dear  
The food that was offered to God first  
In the company of her sire, sons and husband revered.  
Having eaten to his heart's content thus,  
And given the water offering at the end,  
Chewing betel leaves his wedded wife gave  
Sitting on a platform smiling like one pure,  
Pleased he his elder sister happy and contented.

Children of hers this small and that older  
 Clamouring around for breast and the other for attention,  
 Untied she her brother's hair knot  
 To comb and do it afresh.  
 With a sibilant noise killing lice one by one,  
 Parting hair carefully nits to detect,  
 Combing it again and again  
 Fingers and nails skilfully using  
 Sat she with patience infinite doing his hair.  
 Stood the brother's youthful wife fanning her husband dear  
 Giving her sister-in-law leaves of betel.  
 Finished she doing his hair,  
 Wiping the neck clean and,  
 Washing her hands crisp.  
 Seated on a plank brought by the maid  
 Like the goddess of wealth on the lotus stud,  
 Casting loving looks at her sucking babe,  
 Began she to speak, the lotus-eyed one:

"Why, dear brother, have you not come even once to see me ?  
 Was it because it would hinder your study of the Vedas ?  
 Longing and waiting to see you swollen are my eyes,  
 Desires and waits your revered brother-in-law too:  
 To see you, dear, ardently like the sea for the moon to rise.  
 With affluence fair and abundance of qualities  
 Come to your lot by the good grace of God  
 It comes you to appear as the moon for the sea, your sire,  
 But one like you becoming otherwise  
 Falling down from merit and grace  
 Would be mean, like stones of little value  
 Born in mines of holy stones rare.

The right of others have I become, given in matrimony—  
 How grievous would it be for parents  
 Like this to see you fallen and degraded:  
 Hoary traditions of the family you set aside;  
 Fail you to make your parents happy,  
 Treat you your chaste wedded-wife with  
 Conjugal love deserving !  
 Decline you to rise high in esteem popular  
 People ridicule to my very face your education as parrot-learning !  
 Call they your character that of a cat,  
 Wherever did you behave low so to fall ?"

Saying thus furiously, her heart frowning hot with sadness, the lion-waisted one having gone hoarse, noticing the stupid one pulling a long face, regained her temper quickly, and with a desire to do good, proceeded in a softer and more persuasive tone:

"As Karna to the scripture Bharat,  
 So are you to the family central.  
 Why resorted you to this act low,  
 Dastardly leaving all these alone,  
 The everworked parents trembling,  
 Crawling little brothers not on their feet yet,  
 Wife a caste woman devout fresh-wed,  
 The helpless cows and their keeper ?  
 Dream and hope was it of mine  
 That my little brother dear, good and noble,  
 Acclaimed by all, should a rite holy perform  
 With me in place of esteem, supervising.  
 Why fall you did instead devoid of virtues all ?  
 In emotion wild spent you all.  
 Would it be right the thrice-yielding lands precious to sell ?  
 Without a wife, are you ?  
 Don't you have brothers after you ?  
 Meet is it for you the family to ruin ?  
 If desire carnal should you stronghold make  
 Wouldn't it be fair a thousand caste-women to wed ?  
 Are householders hermits and ascetics plain ?  
 Wrong is it to have wedded many wives ?  
 Fair is it in concupiscence all to waste  
 On ill-reputed women, uncouth and dire ?  
 Nobles affluent and kings themselves  
 Would all be impoverished to keep them.  
 Pshaw ! Would the wise for hordes of harlots care ?  
 Bevy of broads and concubines low,  
 Bundles of evil and of manners slovenly,  
 Cares a wise man for trollops filthy ?  
 Hints and suggestions subtle and bawdy,  
 Strange coynesses and play-actings many,  
 Mad pranks and changeful moods.  
 Mean congresses and external attractions,  
 Enticements and gestures deceitful,  
 Hysteric and delirious acts profligate,  
 Games with outbursts lascivious and low,

Disastrous would it be whores to caress.  
 Not too late even now, leave this profligacy, I pray,  
 Go you the way of the wise and fair ?  
 If the need is felt by you, procure I would the rarest gems.  
 Drop you the league of wicked scoundrels,  
 Dear brother, the way I lay, you take,  
 Happy and wish-fulfilled I feel,  
 Meet it is not for you yourself to ruin."

While the elder sister thus did him discipline,  
 Obeyed he the sweet soothing words full.  
 For many days stayed good the soiled one  
 Of food fine and water starved hard.  
 Willingly visited he the court of the king,  
 Renewed his studies gone rusty and dusty,  
 Hung he down his head when friends old he ran into,  
 Consoled he the caste bride of the house,  
 Revered the preceptors wise everyday,  
 Offerings meet he would give to the deities  
 Fed guests arriving past midday at mealtime  
 Cared and tended the milch cattle,  
 Washed he himself his sire's upper-cloth  
 Attended the public court with his brother-in-law  
 Judgements to deliver and arbitrate,  
 Honey-coated sword blade was he, the twice-born.  
 While things went thus, one day:  
 Inlaid with emeralds, sapphires,  
 Carbuncles and rubies bright  
 Opals, turquoises and amethyst clear,  
 Many-hued stones of value rare,  
 Ornaments of the sister dear,  
 Embellishments of pearls and corals,  
 Jewellery gorgeous of choicest gems,  
 The womenfolk of the house dearest held,  
 Tied the depraved youth into a knap-sack quick.  
 Not letting even the bed he lay on know  
 Stole the scoundrel into the darkness of the night  
 The wilderness only his companion lone  
 Ran he away the forest way black.  
 Grief-stricken was the decrepit sire doomed  
 Robbed of the sacred reed-designed ring  
 Broke the old man into tears agonized.

Downcast was the old mother losing the necklace rare,  
 Given to her by her lord's mother with love,  
 Inconsolable was the daughter of the house  
 The nose-ring fresh-made losing,  
 Discomfited was the son-in-law of the family  
 His earstuds of the nine planets propitiating lost.  
 Oh ! What guile and what wickedness rude !  
 All the wealth stole that worthless rake  
 Leaving behind nothing and taking a leap !  
 Knows anyone the time when loss it would be entire !

From *Panduranga Mahatmyamu*, 16th century

Tr. by V. V. B. Rama Rao

## Sugatri and Shaleena

PINGALI SURANA

PINGALI SURANA (Pingali Sūrana, 16th century) was a poet who boldly set out to experiment altogether new types of prabandhas, deviating from the trend of his times. He is known to have composed *Garudapurānamu*, *Girijakalyānamu*, *Raghavapandaviyam*, *Kalapurnodayamu* and *Prabhavatipradyumnamu*. The first two of these are not available today. *Raghavapandaviyam* is a slesha or double-meaning kavya, the first of its kind available in Telugu. The same kavya can be read as both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. *Kalapurnodayamu* (*Kālāpūrṇōdayamu*) is the only medieval Telugu kavya with an invented plot. *Prabhavatipradyumnamu* is the first Rasa-oriented prabandha.

*Kalapurnodayamu* exemplifies Surana's deep urge for originality but it was denounced and rated low by his contemporaries as an *asat* (non-good) kavya and was compared to an artificial diamond. This experience made Surana give up pedantry and go in for an elegantly simple Rasa-oriented kavya, *Prabhavatipradyumnamu*.

*Kalapurnodayamu* is certainly a very complex symbolic poem and is a treasure house of all the six kinds of *vakrata* discussed by Kuntaka.

The story of *Kalapurnodayamu* starts from the love-play of Brahma and Saraswati. As part of the romantic riddling conversation Brahma tells a story suggestively describing the facial beauty of Saraswati and his own urge to kiss it. This story later really takes place on the earth as a story of three births. The present selection is connected to one of these births, tells the story of a peasant couple. Sūgatri is the newly married wife of a young peasant Shaleenudu. Shaleenudu has an aversion for ornaments and attraction for natural beauty. His wife can inspire him to love-making only when she approaches him without ornaments. He develops a curiosity to learn through experience the feeling of a female in love-play. The selection given below (Canto IV, Stanzas 60-142) deals with the question of natural and decorated beauty.

In the land of Kashmir, the seat of higher learning,  
 A reputed scholar and brahmin priest in worship of Saraswati,  
 Had a young daughter renowned for her charm and beauty  
 By name Sugatri, married to Shaleena; a perfect match indeed !  
 He settled in the house of the in-laws since their betrothal.  
 On the nuptial night, bewitchingly-jewelled bride Sugatri  
 Was led by her maiden-folk, into the bed chamber  
 Shaleena, perplexed at the bride's stunning make-up,  
 Stood aghast spell-bound, dumb and unmoved.  
 The bride awe-struck, waited, waited and went inside.

Knowingly, the friends of Sugatri complained to her mother;  
 before such a thing happening  
 "Never in this world have we heard  
 We are jealous for she got such a charming husband.  
 It is futile today, let us wait and see tomorrow."

"O silly girl, he may overhear your words  
 Keep your mouths shut lest he might feel offended.  
 Those that are shy and sensitive do not care.  
 And spare nothing if it hurts their sentiment.

Determined, the mother of Sugatri  
 Two or three days in succession  
 Sent her daughter to the nuptial room,  
 To find no change in his behaviour.

Having obtained the permission of her mother the friends of Sugatri took  
 her to a solitary place for advice. They said:

"O dear, we find no reason  
 For any misunderstanding between you both;  
 Indeed, you are intelligent;  
 What advice can we give to the wise couple ?

If the husband takes the lead  
 There is meaning for the shyness of the wife;  
 If the man is stony and unmoved,  
 How the hell can a woman live with him ?

O! charming lady, you are  
 No more a child to keep mum like this.

Get yourself ready to serve him;  
Never mind if he doesn't hasten you.

Indeed he is rich and manly,  
Being a woman you should not be stubborn.  
If you volunteer to serve him,  
He might accept you in course of time.

Dear, why do you complain  
That he won't invite you for intimate lock ?  
Why don't you offer him in closeness  
Camphored betel-leaves to chew ?

How silly you are, friend !  
Why waste the moonlight pleasure and delights ?  
Waste no more your golden youth;  
On the forlorn bed no more return ?

So long as women are brimmed with youth  
We should enjoy the pleasure of life in full.  
After youth recedes, none will enjoy life  
Dear, do not waste your life, any more."

Having heard the advice of friends  
She said, "Why do you kill me with your words  
I can't bear them,". In utter humility  
At heart she decided to put their advice to action.

Sugatri tried her best, without any response. Then she lamented—"All my efforts are futile in his case—I must be satisfied with this wedding, the only auspicious aspect of life." Hoping that her ornaments would do him good she never took them off. She was taking all care so that her mother might not abuse him. Thus the days passed. Sugatri's mother could not tolerate it any more. So she called her daughter and burst out thus:

"He is a simpleton, no match for you. If we criticise him,  
You abuse us, I had been hopeful all the while  
That you would bear a son, who would inherit  
Our property. He can't give you a child I bet."

"Shaleena, will you please go to our flower-garden  
See if it is properly taken care of," said the mother-in-law.

With great regard and reverence he hastened to the garden,  
In total dedication he took interest in all that work.

"These flowers are utilised  
For the adoration of Goddess Saraswati  
So I'm aptly rewarded—" thus thinking  
He did the work with respect and great regard.

The buzzing bees are busy in singing,  
Making their way from flower to flower;  
The innumerable colours and columns  
Multiplied the deft decorum of the garden.

At the time of watering the plants  
He digs small-canals with wisdom  
At the time of digging the curves  
He uses the hammer and furrow  
At the time of fertilising the plants  
He does it like an expert farmer  
At that time, he tends the branches tender  
To give life to new plants.  
If necessary he attends to the seedlings  
When demanded he goes to plant the cut branches  
Sparing nothing he attends to all the work  
As an expert farmer Shaleena works hard.

Unnerved by the stress and strain of the hard work  
He set out to nourish the trees and creepers alike;  
Lilies, lotuses, jasmines and roses; all varieties  
Of flowers and fruits he grew sumptuous.

The trees are so thick and crowded the sun's rays couldn't enter,  
The flowers are full and pregnant with fragrance;  
The young brahmin who did it with all dedication  
Is all happy at heart, for it is a blessing in disguise.

He wakes up long before sunrise;  
Does all religious rituals in sincerity;  
Saluting the masters, he meditates.  
And leads a happy and simple life within his means.

He plucks the blossomed flowers early  
Selecting the colours to suit his heart's design;



Makes out garlands of different styles;  
Presents them to his wife in veneration.

Then Sugatri as a dutiful wife;  
She was very much perturbed  
At the countenance of her mother; her  
Husband had been toiling day and night.  
So, she hastened to extend a helping hand.

Once, it so happened, when Shaleena had gone to the garden:

The sky was filled with darkened clouds  
Thunders with lightning all encircled;  
Storm broke out as if from nowhere;  
The whole garden was drenched in water.  
Minute after minute the skies roared;  
Every second thundering clouds poured;  
Rain waters ran down with rippling sounds;  
The sky and earth were drenched in disaster.

Wherever you turn, you see  
    The thundering clouds in crowds.  
Whichever way you look, you see  
    Lightning flash out of darkness.  
Wherever you run, you hear  
    Air-dashing stormy gales;  
Whatever you touch, you feel,  
    The ice-chill cold gusty winds.  
Such is the horrid gale all around;  
    It darkened the earth and sky in seconds.  
The garden lands were drenched in rains  
    Nature in total had a nasty bath.

Sugatri, wife of Shaleena, quite disheartened,  
Trembled under the troubled waters, thought  
That her husband might get lost on the way  
For the storm was becoming terrible every minute.  
She wept, and wished all the best for him:  
"O Lord, how do you save yourself in this storm  
By what curse of gods, are you in hardship?"  
Minute after minute she thought of her beloved  
And looked at the sky hoping for a ray of relief.

Oh, dear goddess Sharada !  
 Take pity on me and my husband, Mother,  
 Save my innocent dear Lord,  
 From the calamities of this deadly storm !  
 If in this life and in the past births, there remain  
 The results of any good deeds and penance I performed  
 Let it save my husband from the dangers ahead;  
 Instead let me suffer and undergo the torture for him.

Thus she prayed to her family deity, Goddess Saraswati. Yet she could not contain and stay back at home, she without letting her mother know, alone hastened to the garden, caring not for the stormy weather. It seems by the power of her virtue and righteousness rains receded, the gales subsided, the streams gave way to her. She reached the garden hurriedly where her husband was supposed to be. To her astonishment she saw that he was unperturbed, nonchalant. He looked much more self-willed, steady and confident. Looking at him she exclaimed, "Oh, mother goddess Saraswati, you are very kind towards your children, mother. Really you are gracious. With overwhelming joy she returned home. She had taken care that none should observe her going and coming. She behaved in such a normal way that nobody suspected her movements. Everyone in the village was astonished for the garden was not affected in the least by the storm. Sugatri kept quiet for some more days with tolerance and out of humility.

At long last, brushing her shyness aside, she with  
 Overflowing love and adoration for her husband,  
 Went straight into the garden, dressed and jewelled as usual,  
 Like a rich bride in waiting, met him fully prepared.  
 She set out to share his work, each and every one,  
 Even if he did not yield to share his lot.  
 She kept aside her rich garments and ornaments;  
 Wore a common cloth round her and took to work.

Thus she set out to work;

As she digs and digs hard with the iron rod  
     Her superb breasts tremble in tune;  
 As she moves hither and thither  
     Her heavy buttocks tremble in rhythm;  
 As she waters the young plants in mud,  
     The mud drops sprinkle on her cheeks  
 As she carries heavy grass bundles,  
     Her delicate body tires and rests;

Yet she sweats and swears in utter delight  
 Her tender body and tucked-up hair alike  
 Often and often she moves nearer to  
 Her husband to have a closer look indeed.  
 As she attends to all and sundry so ardently  
 He sees her breasts tremble,  
 The god of love, awaiting long,  
 Shoots his arrows on the couple at once.  
 The effect of the love god's force, Shaleenā could not control:

"O ! Dear, how silly you are to do this menial work.  
 You can't do the garden labour." Thus consoling  
 He took his upper cloth and rubbed the sweat on her face.  
 By the mischief of the love-god the sweat on her face  
 Did not vanish however hard he tried. He said at last:  
 "Why do you undergo such hardship for my sake ?"  
 Saying thus in consolation, he took her into his embrace.  
 He then led her in utter haste  
 To a nearly thick creeper resort  
 He then made love to her;  
 For the first time he enjoyed the bliss of sex.  
 They lost no time, breathed no more  
 Both tied together body and soul;  
 At last she loosened the embrace and said  
 Let us go home, dear, I'm tired a lot."  
 She dressed herself as usual,  
 Had her jewellery on in full as in the past;  
 Thinking in her heart of  
 The pleasure of intimacy, she went back home  
 Like the tender creepers that  
 Loose their vigour in the hot summer days,  
 She lost a bit of her lustre  
 In the ceremonial acts of lust and love.

Having won the grace of her husband and desire fulfilled, Sugatri went back home. Her close friends noticed the striking change in her face and understood that she had contentment and pleasure. They all had a fine day. Her mother too was pleased. By the fall of night the handmaids as usual decorated Sugatri as a nuptial bride with flowers and rich jewels and sent her into the chamber. Then:

Why should one cover the natural curves  
 of the delicate body with tight robes

Why should one hide the bright colour  
of the delicious limbs under cloth  
Why should one wear artificial *kasturi*  
wiping away the *turmeric* smell  
Why should one hide the beautiful long legs  
under disastrous saree folds.  
He paid no heed to the artificiality,  
To the golden jewellery from head to toe,  
He could not forget her primitive touch  
That allured him to his heart's brim.  
He paid no attention to her any more.  
He had in mind her picture in the garden.  
She felt depressed and desolate once again.  
As he kept quiet, untouched, unmoved.  
The first experience had given tremendous pleasure.  
The next one had become a barren one  
For days she had to wait reminiscent,  
Ornaments on her body became a burden.

So passed the days; one day she thought in composure;  
"If I were to return, where to go ?  
To whom do I belong hereafter ?  
Let me stay back, come what may,  
My destiny will decide the future.  
The delicate damsel long awaited, at last  
Picking up courage stepped up to him and said:  
"It seems you are tired, if you want sleep I shall leave."  
The camphor smell from her mouth woke up his spirits.  
Absent-minded, he enquired:  
"With what desire have you come here ?"  
She felt sad and queried:  
"Why do women approach their husbands ?"  
She kept quiet for a while, and said:  
"O ! Lord ! let other things be;  
You are kind enough to enquire why  
I came to you with what desire;  
I am greatly enriched by your grace.  
Alas, how can I abuse you ? It's early before dawn.  
I hope that you would invite me to your side.  
At least to massage your feet, or you would lead me  
To share your bed, nothing of that sort, I pity.  
Yesterday in the garden I was fortunate enough  
To have my desire fulfilled. Hoping the same  
Kindness from you, I did approach you tonight  
I know a good housewife should not take the lead."

So saying she felt sad and much disturbed at heart,  
She could not control her emotion and broke out thus:  
"O ! My God, even stones are less  
Hard than your heart; none  
In this world hesitates like this."

So saying she dropped at his feet in desolation.  
She pressed his feet, sat on the edge of the bed  
Tickled him here and there, touching the thighs  
She gave vent to her passion, tried to arouse in him;  
Even pressed her breasts, eyes half closed in ecstasy.  
Even then he was unmoved  
She was taken aback at his stubbornness.  
Finding no reason for his stiffness  
Burst out with despair and anger on her cheeks:

"If you have already given your heart to some woman  
And could not take it back, I'll bring her home, dear.  
I have no objection to serve her like a menial.  
By the Almighty, I promise that I'll do anything for you.  
My lord, why do you trouble yourself ?  
You can sell me, I am prepared for that  
If it pleases your heart.  
But don't get depressed on my account."

Consoling him thus with her sweet words, she massaged his feet.  
He paid no attention to her service, unmoved  
He tried to collect the primitive glamour at  
The time of the first union, her cherished colour,  
The efficiency of her work in his company, that docility  
That cherishing love and varied sex postures, he enjoyed.  
She, in pristine purity, as wife  
Served him, pressed his feet all night.  
She knew nothing but love  
And dedication to the man she was married to.

As she did on the previous occasion  
She went to the garden and did all the work.  
It again pleased his heart, she concluded  
That natural beauty pleased him, not the make-up.  
Knowing the mind of her husband,  
She daily hastened to the garden to work.  
She did behave as he expected of her.  
Slowly her mother came to know about all this.

When Sugatri was all alone, her mother met her and said:  
 "Dear daughter, you are born by the grace of Goddess Saraswati  
 So you are thoroughly aware of all the disciplines of life.  
 By your own act the honour of our family is cherished.  
 Thus advised the wife of Lord Brahma in my dream," she said.  
 "Perchance, your husband deserts you  
 And go astray, and you give birth to children.  
 I readily take the curse on me;  
 Await the good days on your behalf.  
 Dear daughter, I, in desperation  
     Condemned your husband, feeling  
 That your married life  
     Has broken in such a miserable way.  
 I know you did not tolerate  
     and got angry with me,  
 Now, you have proved that you are right;  
     You are the gem of a housewife.

"I remember, even in your earlier days  
 You used to get angry for a small rebuff.  
 You never cared even for your friends  
 Who often laughed at your behaviour.

"Never did you criticise the goodness  
     of others nor hear their praise.  
 Never did you allow a fault in your love  
     towards your husband, self-sufficed.  
 If he is happy, you are happy. If he is sad,  
     you feel sad, you are in tune with him.  
 Never are you proud, given lenience;  
     never feel sad at heart.

"Like a pot full of water, you are  
 Full of poise and self-contained.  
 When your husband is away from you,  
 Never do you add glamour to your body.

"Then spend nights and days  
     ...  
     in the acts of love

By the grace of Goddess Bharati  
 you have proved to be a good wife.  
 "One thing one could not relish, my dear,  
 It strikes my mind; please listen;  
 By untimely sexual involvement  
 I fear, the child you bear will be crippled.

"For he was adamant and stubborn to please you  
 In utter disgust, I had to drive him to the garden.  
 Oh, it is a curse of some god; why should he go to the garden

Don't we have enough labourers to work in our service ?  
 O bright-eyed-lady !  
 You are young, more intelligent than  
 Many, you are fully aware of  
 What to do, what not to do; the ethics of life."

On hearing the words of her mother, Sugatri smiled:  
 "Whatever pleases my mind I do: others I don't , I discard them.  
 I pay no heed to anybody in my personal affairs,  
 To me, my husband in Guru, god and veda and all in one;  
 I care little for your advice or anybody in this regard.  
 Listen mother, I don't have personal likes and dislikes.  
 I don't discard anything or accept anything.  
 Every act I do is according to the fancy of my husband.  
 If he doesn't like anything, I certainly will reject."

When Sugatri sternly said these words  
 To her mother, Saraswati was pleased with  
 Her dedication, and materialised in front of her  
 Pointing out to her, she said to her mother:  
 "Don't find fault with this young lady;  
 Don't try to correct her; it is no sin  
 To have great love towards her husband  
 Both you families are saved by her.  
 By her very acts you are free from sins.  
 Not only that, I bless and assure her  
 That I'll make her life a legend  
 An epitome of moral and pure love."

## Vasucharitram

### RAMARAJABHUSHANUDU

RAMARAJABHUSHANUDU (Rāmarājabhūṣaṇuḍu, 16th century) is the title under which Bhattumurthi (Bhaṭṭamūrti) of the court of Ramarayalu, the son-in-law of Shri Krishnadevarayalu, was popularly known as he was an ornament to Ramarayalu. Though listed among the *Ashtadiggajas* he actually lived after Shri Krishnadevarayalu's time. He belonged to the second half of the Prabandha era in which Shlesha (pun) Kavya was the dominant genre.

Three books of Ramarajabhushanudu, viz. (1) *Narasabhupaliyamu* (Narasa bhūpāliyamu or Kavyalankarasangrahamu, (2) *Harishchandranalopakhyanamu*, (Harisṣchandranalōpākhyānamu) which can be read at once for the stories of Harischandra and Nala told through pun in every line and (3) *Vasucharitramu* (Vāsuṣaritramu) a *prabandha* are available today. *Vasucharitramu* is the most famous of them.

Scholars feel that the genre of *prabandha* reached the pinnacle of its development in *Vasucharitramu*. It is marked by descriptive skill, exquisite craftsmanship, dominance of figurative style and the treatment of erotic love. It is said that in no other book has the combination of music and literature reached such a marvellous perfection. Thus *Vasucharitra* is generally compared to a magic diamond castle with kaleidoscopic multiple reflections on the base as the beautiful building up of meanings within meanings in it, which leaves its audience in a state of awe, amazement and exuberance of poetic relish.

The work tells the story of a king called Vasuraju who kicks off a huge mountain Kolahaludu with his big toe which falls over the river Suktimati and molests it. It describes the love affairs of Vasuraju and Girika, the heroine being the daughter born to Suktimati, when molested by Kolahaludu.

Three excerpts are given here: One, the invocation; two Manjuvani's words to Vasuraju; and then the description of Suktimati and the birth of Girika.

### I

The invocation of the poem commences as follows:

The earth-born Sita viewed with grace replete  
Her beauteous form reflected near her feet  
By brilliant gems that, with various shade  
And plastic pow'r, a graceful maid portray'd;  
She, Rama's consort and betrothed wife,  
Conceived a new creation sprang to life,  
Touch'd by the dust of her lord's potent foot,



Till he remov'd the Goddess' anxious doubt.  
 Then in the nuptial rites and holy band,  
 He grasp'd the jewels in his heav'nly hand;  
 May Sita's husband blessings e'er bestow  
 On Terumala Raya's royal brows  
 With the moonlike face, from which each science gleams,  
 With ruby lips replete with saccharine streams  
 From which the boon of the latent wishes flow,  
 And which rich fruits effectually bestow;  
 With nectar-vested breasts as pure as truth,  
 Abundant source of wealth and blooming youth,  
 With arms like tendrils that in shadowy bow'rs;  
 Are decked in the beauty of unfading flow'rs  
 Shri was produced when Rama's efforts tried,  
 In Janaka's lacteal ocean wide,  
 He, Hari's self, while fiercely bending low,  
 Bent the tough string to Shiva's mountain-bow,  
 May that bright Goddess the choicest blessings bring  
 To Terumala Raya, the peerless king !

The sister arts, that yield harmonious sound,  
 In music and in poesy are found,  
 The dulcet component of tunes and verse,  
 Each with her charms th' enraptur'd soul immense  
 And whirl'd in circling eddies round and clear,  
 Like Saraswati's fragrant breasts appear;  
 May he who can (of lawful love the tests)  
 Grasp with his palms those luscious budding breasts !  
 And in love's depot mark them as his own,  
 By no ignoble puncture plainly shown  
 May that divinity his pow'rs select  
 And Terumala, the mighty king, protect !  
 The alphabet that like a rosary seems  
 By her lute's melody soon melt in streams  
 And all round reflect fair Vani's face  
 As God supreme pervading time and space,  
 May she the gift of eloquence confer  
 On Terumala, the king without compare !  
 Arya with jealous rage possessed  
 To her great consort his reproach addressed:  
 "Well ! Well ! You are faithless to my marriage bed,  
 Mandakini, you keep on your head,  
 Whilst I, alas ! am dwindle'd half way."

Lord God prostrating then began to pray:  
 "I appease her ire by humbly bending low.  
 But Ganga waxing wrath did clamorous grow  
 Till Shiva tied his hair; this pretext sage  
 The Goddess silenced and restrained her rage  
 May that great being in a bounteous show'r  
 On Terumala all his mercies pour !  
 On either side with fragrant braided hair  
 Like dusky clouds that float in ambient air  
 With ornamental symbols, on each side,  
 Full blown, shining in their beauties' pride  
 With flaming eyes that dart her splendours clear,  
 And snake-ring pendants that adorn each ear,  
 With necklaces whose light illumines each land  
 And graceful lotuses in either hand,  
 With robes of diverse hues and powder rare  
 Of the love-god, a drug beyond compare  
 Thus decked the mountain-born half of her lord  
 Does in each essence to her mate accord.  
 May she bestow on Terumala Roy  
 Victorious battle and triumphant joy !

While he with mighty tusks resistless strook  
 Then mountain huge Tagutasara shook  
 Then graceful Parvati with unconscious start  
 Embraced Shiva to her throbbing heart,  
 While Ganga o'er great Shiva's brow  
 In falling streams is dashed in earth below;  
 The mountain-born is pleased with feats now done  
 By her own elephant-faced son  
 To that prescient God, whose name I take  
 With holy awe, obeisance I make.

//

The following lines from the second book are spoken by Manjuvani to Vasuraju, when she is deputed by her mistress Girika.

O ruler of the world ! your presence bright  
 Fills each expanding heart with true delight  
 And joy; as when propitious fortune pours

Unmeasured treasures down in golden show'rs  
 Or when the moon, in plenitude array'd,  
 Shoots her bright splendours through the midnight shade  
 Friend of the world ! O pow'rful deity !  
 The effulgence of your penetrating eye  
 Dispels the darkness and the gloom profound  
 Whose sable mantle covers us around  
 Your graceful presence on this auspicious day  
 O king of kings, exiles each care away !  
 With every keen desire and wish possessed  
 Fill'd to satiety we stand confessed,  
 O sov'reign of the earth ! Your heav'nly tread  
 Approaching does with potent blessing shed  
 On mortals immortality and grace  
 And makes our wisdom match th' ethereal race  
 Pre-eminent in good your virtue pours  
 Like fruitful autumn its prolific stores;  
 Whilst we our homage pay we gain these thrifts  
 The rural Goddess sheds her choicest gifts  
 Exuberant to me and to my friends; with joy  
 In plenty we our happy hours employ,  
 We can the grateful voice sufficient raise  
 Receive the boon and give eternal praise.

### III

This is an extract from *Biographical Sketches of Deccan Poets* written by  
 Cavelling Venkataramaswami, Printed in 1829 (Reprinted in Madras in 1888).

(Book III, Stanzas 19-23)

### 19

[Meaning I]: The agitation receding all over  
 (The agonized heart getting cooler)  
 at the arrival of the undoer  
 of the pride of the mountain-king,  
 all the waters obstructing  
 the womb of the lady river pleasant,  
 are now clearly visible.

[Meaning II]: The atmosphere clearing all over  
 at the arrival of the Agastya star,  
 the controller of the world-troubler;  
 the bed of the calm river

in now seen very clear.

20

[Meaning I]: Now is to be seen the full waist  
 of the conch-faced lovely maiden  
 the wrinkles around the navel  
 not to be seen at all above;  
 Now for the fish-eyed woman Aye  
 the stairs and upper floor are felt a bit high  
 and now and now her steps  
 getting slower and slower  
 for her with her marvellous hair braided up  
 a liking for stranger tastes develops  
 now is to be seen her cheek turned white  
 above her neck conch-shaped,  
 now her tight bracelets slip loose  
 now her voice goes low and low,  
 to her with the gait of a swan,  
 the breasts, with the tips honey-bee dark,  
 bulge like golden lotus buds  
 now the navel more pronounced,  
 the hair around black like bright moss.

[Meaning II]: Now is to be seen the deep middle part  
 of the river with the conchs on the upper level,  
 now for the river with the fishes as eyes  
 hard to climb the ups and heights  
 the river-current now slowed down,  
 the beautifully flowing river waters  
 develop now some stranger tastes,  
 the line of boulders is clear  
 for the river with conchs in the ups  
 are dripping denser water drops,  
 the sound of the river gets low and low,  
 in the river in which the swans do move  
 the beauty of the golden lotus buds does grow,  
 with the centres of the whirls clear,  
 now grows brighter the dark moss-hair.

21

[Meaning I] : In this way she the pregnant one,  
 got filled with water;

the women of the royal, working,  
brahmin and merchant classes protecting,  
at an hour auspicious.

[Meaning II]: In that way the river filled  
with water-beings, got water-filled  
with bird-maidens who by nature  
flying high sing  
at an hour auspicious.

## 22

[Meaning I] : Where the bright-bush labour-house spread  
shone with torch-lights of water-lily red  
with honey and oil in fresh lotus brought  
at a rare and well-protected spot  
she delivered a daughter and a son.

[Meaning II]: Where a huge and new bush-site  
shone with water-lily torch-light  
Where the oily honey oozed  
brightly shining in a lotus,  
at a rare spot where the grams pollen  
protected the river, she delivered then  
a son and a daughter.

## 23

[Common Meaning]:  
Who can read the blessings nice  
of stars and moon at the time auspicious  
when the river-child took its noble birth.

[Meaning I]:  
The husband of stars, the moon, was benevolent,  
the stars' quarters unmalevolent;

[Meaning II]:  
The husband of stars formed its face,  
the stars got into its feet and nails.

## Pacification

NANDI TIMMANA

NANDI TIMMANA (16th century) is listed among the *Ashtadiggajas* or eight stalwart poets believed to have been in the court of Shri Krishnadevarayalu. Though some of those in the list are found by researchers to have no contemporaneity with Shri Krishnadevarayalu, Nandi Timmana who dedicated his only work to the poet-king, was certainly in the court of that king, and must have been one of the *Ashtadiggajas*. He is popularly known as Mukku Timmana.

*Parijatapaharanamu* (Pārijātāpaharaṇamu) is the only known work by this poet, and it belongs to the genre called *Prabandhamu* today. It is counted among the *Panchakavyas* or five classic poetic works in Telugu.

It stands apart from the other Prabandhas; it is neither a *sthalapurana*, nor a devotional legend nor even a work known for any experimental or decorative quality or for complexity of plot. It is a simple but intensely juicy poetic composition, with a popular and playful theme of romance, on Lord Krishna.

Nandi Timmana is known for his "pretty expression" on 'Muddu paluku.' Scholars interpret their popular impression about the poet as a reference to his softly attractive diction or lovely and lovable verbal composition.

In line with the Prabandha compositions of the day, *Parijatapaharanamu* employs *vakrokti* theory and is an excellent example for *prakarana vakrata*. The episode is that of Shrikrishna pacifying Satyabhama. Satyabhama feels jealous of Rukmini, as Shrikrishna gives the celestial flower brought from Indra's world by Narada to her. Satyabhama gets upset and angry. When Shrikrishna tries to appease her by pressing her feet, she kicks him and refuses to cool down. She gets back her smiles only after she gets a promise from Shrikrishna that he would bring her the flower from Indra's garden. This episode of *Parijatapaharanamu* was the model for similar *santvana* (pacifying appeasement) episodes in later poems.

The following passage is the Satyabhama *santvanamu* episode from the work.

"Dwaraka is Vaikuntha, the very heaven,  
This Rukmini, your consort, is Lakshmi the true goddess of wealth,  
And you, verily, the Lord Vishnu Himself;  
Come here I oftentimes my worship to offer  
With a mind devout, O, killer of Kamsa, Mukunda, Murari!"

So praising Lord Krishna in myriad ways, Narada, the son of  
Virinchi, with joy pervading his heart, proffered Him in a  
Tender lotus-leaf wrap the Parijata flower, bees hovering above  
As if to signify the glory of its fragrance, the dew-drops on the  
Flower symbolizing the tears of joy rushing to his eyes,

Radiant with the fame of having the capacity to fulfil all  
 Desires and wafting fragrance divine.  
 With humility and wonder filling his mind,  
 Took the lord the offering  
 While looking at the daughter of Bhishmaka,  
 His thoughts to Satyabhama fled.

Would the daughter of Satrajit be cross,  
 If gave it I to Bhoja's daughter ?  
 If I send her this to Satrajit's offspring,  
 Would Rukmini be sadly belittled  
 Best it were, thought he, to give it to the lady of the house there.

A lustrous smile into his wide-open eyes descending  
 Getting the signal from the sage's eyes  
 Gave the lord the flower to Rukmini, with grace  
 She taking it in great style, made the seer obeisance deep,  
 And the heavenly flower tucked she in her hair  
 Her face bathed in the radiance of the crescent moon.

Enhanced stood the lustre of the dame's eyes  
 Putting to ridicule the glory of the male fish;  
 Appeared her breasts assuming a fabulous hue  
 Reducing the Jakkava birds' shapeliness to naught;  
 The plaits of her hair shone  
 Radiant like the shining black of the bees;  
 Came there a rare glow on her face,  
 Casting around sparkling light;  
 Came there a new loveliness to her beauty.  
 A strange freshness to her youth,  
 A rare grace to her wondrous delicacy:  
 All caused by the heavenly flower.

While the melodious-throated one  
 Looked radiant like a washed pearl,  
 With a large smile spreading on his face  
 Spoke the son of the lotus-seated creator  
 'Hastening with eagerness a quarrel to kindle:

"Lotus-eyed one ! Rarely accessible it is for humans;  
 Indra's consort, the daughter of Himvant and  
 The lotus-seated creator's consort  
 Wear it in their hair every day;

The outer life of Hari are you and so your fortune it is to wear,  
He giving it to you above sixteen thousand wives,  
Unparalleled is your merit of previous births and fortune.  
Joyous is the flower for being on your head.  
Used judiciously it would fulfil desires you hold dear.  
Explain I would in detail the myriad powers of the blossom.

Lotus-faced one ! Fade it never will, nor wither  
Nor lose its fragrance, freshness ever retaining,  
Ever in its full bloom  
Will this flower be joy-giving to the world entire.  
Bee-like black-haired one ! When you in dalliance meet  
Roused by the flower-arrowed one to amorous feats.  
This flower a lamp would be for you to make love by,  
And a fan agreeably to dry the sweat off your bodies.

Drives this away hunger and thirst, giving food of choicest varieties  
Keeping fatigue and all inauspicious things away.  
Bestowing all things desirable. Just for the wearing  
Excel you all the myriad woman enjoying prosperity diverse.

Black lotus-eyed one ! Wearing this in your hair  
Draw you the vying rival wives around to your feet,  
Your lord never would dream your word to transgress  
Obeys you always, his love staying, undilute joy to you giving.

When in your hair this blossom divine  
Gives you coolness in the hot season  
And suitable warmth in the cold winter,  
The novelties of this fabulous bloom impossible it is to list.

Flower among damsels graceful,  
Never will this fade or go stale.  
Becomes you this, enhancing every grace;  
Stay you wearing this, O blossomed-lotus-eyed one !

Heard I the word go about that Satya your lord obeys,  
Slave to the very movement of her eyes,  
But damsel pure, never have you seen the love he has  
For this incomparable bloom gave he to anyone else ?  
Proud, arrogant and gloating that hers is the beauty all,  
Youth and fame only hers entire, hers her husband devoted,



Wouldn't Satya that looks down on women all around  
 Feel slighted and hopelessly grieved hearing of this flower ?  
 From the day you wear it  
 For a full year fresh this will stay  
 And will return then immediately  
 To the very place it has come from."

The words so uttered by Narada  
 With the entire circumstances in detail  
 Diversely will the maids in attendance  
 Quickly to others carry, themselves stricken with grief.

Reassured herself Lakshana, that being the eldest Rukmini got the flower;  
 Cooled herself Kalindi, consoled herself Bhadra, stopped  
     Sudanti feeling depressed,  
 Restrained in themselves anger and jealous Jambavati and Mitravrinda.  
 The highest in the height of self-esteem, began wondering  
 Why her maid in attendance delayed return from Shrihari, her lord,  
 Sat waiting, the lotus-wide-eyed one in her palace garden,  
 Beside the engineered perfume-giving rivulet, Chandalvas  
     wafting fragrance  
 Seated on a moon-rock seat, went she on describing to her handmaid  
 The glorious traits of her lord beloved.  
 Finding the melodious music of bees  
 And singing birds hidden among tender leaves,  
 The soft, cool breeze not sweet as before,  
 Fell into a faint doubt Satyabhama; and seeing the maid:

"Alas ! I wish I knew why: These ill omens,  
 The quivering of the right shoulder, eye and nipple  
 Portend something inauspicious, drawn to sadness my mind is.  
 Tremble I for this: the lord, the light of my life,  
 Entangled with another woman is he ?"

While Satyabhama hinted at her apprehension to a maid dear  
 Came in rushing there another in attendance  
 Speaking thus her eyes, exuding the red of dawn:

"Mother dear ! Vexed am I and sad to tell  
 Not knowing how to convey it,  
 While the lord of yours in Rukmini's palace shining  
 Came in there, all of a sudden, Narada, unexpected.

Having come to the lord, the sage renowned,  
The auspicious and the officacious, the one angelic,  
The most comfort-giving and joyous flower  
Impossible of attainment to any other,  
Praising it gave he to your lord.

Over-joyed took he the blossom  
Considering it a boon precious  
With utmost respect making obeisance deep  
Gave he in turn the flower to Rukmini  
And pat the lady tucked it in her hair.

In the meanwhile miraculously enough  
Limitless wondrous grace and beauty coming,  
Rukmini, the moon-faced one, shone in effulgence  
Like an arrow sharp of the deity of love.

O, sparkling-eyed one ! How should I describe it to you, dear !  
The moment she wore the blossom, she had under his power  
Damsels all shedding their jealousy began her to serve  
She sitting on the dais as one ruling the worlds three.

Capable is Narada of knowing the impossible  
Said he not in the hearing of your lord, Rukmini and me too,  
The arrogance of Satya for having the lord her slave,  
None matching her love and sway, now to naught has come.

The guiles and wiles of the quarrel sustained  
The deeds of Krishna, the killer of hated Mura,  
The mien of that Rukmini and her behaviour joyous,  
O, lotus-eyed one ! will sting one into sulking,  
Whoever wouldn't to anger be provoked ?"

Fell Satya to ground in a heap, like a female snake felled.  
And rising like a fierce tongue of flame,  
Cheeks reddened from the looks flowing from her eyes  
Pervading the comely leaf-paste drawings thereon,  
Spoke she in low tones sad:

"What ! Came he, the quarrel-fed seer, and spoke he so ?  
Did the milkmaid-lover give ear to words so spoken ?  
What said he and what replied she ?  
The lotus-eyed one ! Speak, then, why hide anything now ?

Given it in flattery as a gift fabulous, the sage may have;  
 May the lord too, in his turn, to his loved one have given.  
 Be it so, but why should the plaited-haired sage,  
 The wily and guileful mischievous celestial sage, think of us ?

Natural it is for the one  
 Wandering the three worlds uttering provocations;  
 Thinking quarrel alone a medicine is for all,  
 Shouldn't the lord him restrain ?

What could the sage do ?  
 Why blame it on Rukmini ?  
 How could I describe the cowherd's misdeed ?  
 Wouldn't the heart burn if my lord, my husband, is so ?

Undiscriminating all men are,  
 Unstable and changeful are women said to be,  
 But not assessed as they are, truly speaking;  
 It's men who are changeful and inconstant:  
 Their hearts like clouds in the season of Sharat.

All these days, even among consorts, renowned  
 Respected and beloved have I been:  
 Now, thus insulted by the lord wouldn't I be laughed at ?  
 Tolerate would I such heinous treatment ?  
 Would life any longer be sweet again ?

Aren't wondrous the deeds of the killer of demon Mura,  
 Play-acting with me, showing overflowing love,  
 Hiding his affection real, regard, love and grace for Rukmini ?  
 Wonder I, how feigned he all along and so well ?

O, Companion dear ! Narada gave a flower to Krishna,  
 And he it gave, that wandering-eyed one !  
 Oh ! What words these are ! Living thus hereafter,  
 What more shall I have to endure, hear and suffer ?

Knows the world entire who's who and what is good and evil,  
 Without my having to go about telling.  
 Knows he not, the killer of the demon Naraka,  
 Knows she not, the daughter of King Bhoja herself ?

Krishna must have found it fit to give the flower,  
For it was to her palace that the sage brought it,  
And then, it might be just to see she offended is.  
Should the consorts then begin to fall at her feet for this ?  
Surprises not, his giving the flower there,  
Wonder I to see these wives being so crass her to worship.

O, Lotus-eyed one ! Fortune and blessedness,  
And merit of previous births it is  
For a woman to have a husband  
That would have in her mind always  
Like the thread holding flowers in a garland.

O, Moon-faced one ! Dread he would even in a dream  
My word to disobey, not giving another anything  
Without first offering me, bribe he would the maids  
Lest they carry tales against him,  
Tolerates not he when co-consorts claim their portion  
With friendship and affection boundless,  
With desires knowing no satiety,  
With never a sign of deception  
Together have we always been: how could he do this and to me ?

Playing hide and seek in caves,  
Doing deeds of wonder while performing flower weddings,  
Forcing payment of dues in gambling, pulling at my uppercloth,  
Observing at dusk the separation of the bird couple,

Playing in broad moon light,  
Sitting on the moonrock seats,  
Looking at the images drawn on slates:  
Forgot he all these, entangled in Rukmini's charms ?

A husband to wife is the very bond of life,  
God, and the giver of seven protections;  
Were he to transgress the limit,  
Is there a way for a wife to live ?

Tolerable it is to endure  
A husband giving or taking money  
Were he to give amorous intimacy to another:  
Possible is it to exist and survive, dear ?

Thus grieving, inconsolable and sulking grave,  
Retreated she to the quarter of pouting anger,  
Like a female snake into the hollow of a red sandal tree.

Wearing a saree soiled, being sullen, all ornaments cast away,  
With a cloth tied round her temples the pain to alleviate.  
Anointed with the paste of *kasturi* thick, with heart grief-laden,  
Tossed she in her bed in a corner of the darkened chamber.  
Stricken with pangs of separation by love-god caused.

Deep anguish and pain like a serpent's bite caused,  
Jealousy cursing like poison fast in her body,  
The lotus-eyed one suffered passion extreme,  
Intolerable grew her grief, began she to shudder,  
Body breaking into a sweat, her heart a pallor overtook.

Slightly would she open her eyes, laugh and nod her head  
Sighing on her bed, would fights and shocks experience,  
While in her mind peevishness growing, sulking and raging,  
Suffers she the pangs of love trembling like a lotus in a  
rogue elephant's trunk.

Glory of beauty suffering,  
Thus the daughter of Satrajit in the height of rage,  
Grief-stricken was she.

While Hari in trouble-tossed mind wondered what the maid  
Stealthily seeing him give the flower to Bhoja's daughter  
Would do, concocted stories her mistress to tell,

Mounted he his chariot quickening the steeds,  
In hurry dire drove he to the row of Satya's palaces,  
His wheels aflutter and turning like the chariot wheels.

Getting off the chariot, leaving a man at the gate  
Went he in alone, passing the inner chambers  
Seeking her out in the palace large.

Why aren't the ladies in attendance feeding sugar to the parrots caged ?  
Why aren't they coaxing the peacocks rhythmically to dance ?  
Why aren't they playing the *vina*, pulling at strings with nails sharp ?  
Why aren't they assembling royal swans walking to teach ?

Wherefore are things different today ?  
Looks this palace a little downcast, losing its charm ?  
Did someone carry the *parijata* episode to the lotus-eyed one ?

Thus apprehensive walked he softly into the quarter of pouting anger  
With all his guiles becoming manifestly clear,  
Talking confidentially to some,  
With shattering looks, looking at some  
With gestures and signs, some winning,  
All the palace maids subdued he and went in  
Seeing Satrajit's daughter, her face hidden under the sheet,  
Lying like a tender creeper sun-struck in summer severe.

Took the wily cowherd from a maid  
A palm-leaf fan his lady to wave himself with  
His lady's reaction to observe, and thus  
Fanned he the love-god's fire in her.

Fanned thus by the lord,  
The fragrance wondrous of the *parijata* wafting around,  
Removed she the cover from her face the chamber to scan  
And found the husband with concern great, waving the fan.  
Tears copiously flowing down her cheeks thin,  
Like the honey from the laval leaves  
Retreated she quickly into the sheet again.

The black-cloud-bodied one, coming to comfort the lotus-eyed Satya,  
But heaved she carrying the smouldering fire within  
Her saree-end waving in the gusts strong.

Washed away by sweat was  
The vermilion leaf-paste decoration on her breast,  
As though filtering she was  
The red coloured juice of anger.

Finding his egoistic dear one, not shedding her anger  
Being cross, grief-stricken and sulking,  
With love gushing from his heart  
Spoke softly the lotus-navelled lord, thus:

"Moon-faced one ! Wherefore wear you not ornaments ?  
Ill afford you abandoning muslins delicate and fine,  
Wherefore clad you are in a saree white ?

Why not reddened your lips with betel-juice are.  
 Endeavour you my heart to test or is just for fun ?  
 Or would rather intend to give me a fright ?  
 Or is it that I offended you by some fault ?  
 O lotus-eyed one ! Look you upon me as an alien, an enemy ?  
 Can thus live I even for a trice, if you with grace look not on me ?  
 Wherefore speak you not words oozing honeyed sweetness ?  
 Look you not at me with blushes in the corners of eyes ?  
 Breasts pressing against my chest, wherefore clasp me not  
 in embrace ?  
 Dear one, with eye-corners like the parrot's, whatever was done  
 to anger you so ?

Love I you alone, in mind, word and deed;  
 My acts outward are only the other women to please;  
 See you not the esteem I hold you in,  
 Orders you deliver and obey I would at all times.  
 Know you not that mistress you are to me unique ?

Youthful woman ! Blessed one am I with the nectar of your lips  
 And the tight embrace of your hands loving me ever.  
 If not that entreat I for a sideward glance from your eye,  
 Impatient I am for your grace to flow," said the lord,  
 Pulling at her saree-end, trying to slap her with a lotus with  
 love.

The weight of anger in the woman feeling forlorn  
 Impossible to accomplish it another way.  
 Fell he at her tender leaf-like feet in supplication,  
 Their radiance enhancing the glory of his diadem stones.

The head of the sire of the love-god,  
 By deities like the lotus-seated creator,  
 And the lord of gods worshipped  
 Creeper-bodied Satya with her left-foot kicked.  
 Proper it is. For when husbands hideous mistakes make,  
 Would ladies thus provoked learn better to behave ?

The kick of the beloved's, angered by love,  
 Caused horripilation pleasant and  
 Stimulated the lord's amorous desires deep  
 And with affection welling spoke he then:

"Curly-haired one ! Honour and endearment  
 It is for me to receive this treatment from you.

The tender leaf-bud of your foot touching my hair,  
In rigid and sharp horripilation,  
Must have hurt you, dear; shed you this ire."

Hearing this, up the damsel stood  
Her body half exposing, raised she her hands to tie up her hair  
Quickly hiding her breasts into a sweat breaking,  
Frightened lips like tender leaf-buds quivering.

"The result this is of my believing your falsehoods sweet,  
Why these skilful lies, these flatteries ?  
Got I the reward and fruit quickly enough of trusting you ?  
Oath on you, know you not how laughed at have I been ?  
Knows a cow-herd the strategies of the Love-god ?  
Provoke me no further, for trust you, I never will again,  
Relish not I the lies you speak me to win;  
Dear they are, perhaps, like life to the lotus-eyed Rukmini,  
Cow-herd servant, feign not intimacies unreal.  
Deceit, guile and bad behaviour, right from your birth,  
Mischiefs of many a kind have you imbibed all along,  
Knowing this all, being innocent and helpless, trusting you  
deceived I fell.

What do I now; losing my charm, esteem and everything,  
Came the seer and gave the flower making much of the lady dear to you,  
Have I to suffer to hear words to my pate not delicious  
Your coming here carrying the fragrance of *parijata*.  
Tell me truly, was it not to mock and ridicule me ?

Ornaments to women character and renown are  
Greater than life are they to us;  
Basic they are for all honours,  
Why life for a woman with these gone ?

Holds Devaki me in esteem high,  
As the eldest of her daughters ?  
Would it not slighting to me be  
To go serve her whom intimacies rare you gave ?

Wonder I as to whoever would this Syamantaka wear hereafter,  
Whoever hereafter would in these bowers and caves daily,  
Wherever hereafter the possession of the spring pleasure domes have,



Whoever would hereafter consorting with you from the casements  
into the sea look out ?

Alas ! What the parrots and the peacocks I reared would overtake  
Before my co-consorts have their laugh, as per my vow, please  
you I would.

Me for an ordinary woman took you ?”

Thought she, holding grief captive and secret,  
Face fallen, looks downcast and voice choked, unable to speak,  
Troubled by the fierce jealousy-born grief fostered in her heart.  
In the very sight of the lord of her life,  
Covering her lotus face, the friend of the lord of light,  
with her *sari*-end,

In the tones of the tender leaf-bud-eating cuckoo,  
Broke the creeper-bodied one into a wail euphonious:  
That diamond of a lady by grief weighed down,  
Unable to bear any longer, closed her the lord,  
In an embrace tight, comforting, wiping away cursing tears,  
In great concern and friendliness, sweetness oozing began he:

“Dear one with black diamond-haired beauty !  
Why this great grief for a flower mere ?  
Listen, would I force my way into the gods’ flower garden  
And undaunted even to fight with their king, the killer of Balasura,  
Driving him away, would I bring the *parijata* whole to give you here.  
Charming-eyed ! In your pleasure-garden extensive  
Near the pleasant lake that spreads coolness around  
By the red lotus rows, amidst sweet plantains  
As a backyard creeper would this *parijata* plant.”

Words these of the blue-cloud-hued one hearing,  
Exulted Satyabhama, like a creeper in full bloom  
Amidst peacock maids in attendance and companions.

From *Parijatapaharanamu*, 16th century

Tr. by V. V. B. Rama Rao

## Songs

### KSHETRAYYA

KSHETRAYYA (Kṣētrayya, 1600-1660) hailed from the village Movva in the present Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. This poet-singer is known to have composed

more than four thousand erotic lyrics which are known as *Muvva Gopala Padamulu* (Muvva Gōpāla Padamulu) or *Kshetrayya Padalu*. The theme of these padams is the romance between Lord Krishna, the principal deity of a temple in Kshetrayya's village, and His beloveds. Only three hundred and fifty of them are available today. Kshetrayya is considered to have been at the courts of the Tanjore king Raghunatha Nayaka and his son Achyuta Vijaya Raghava Nayaka for several years. It is believed he was honoured in the courts of Madhura and Golconda also.

Kshetrayya seems to have been influenced by the erotic lyrics composed by Annamacharyulu. His lyrics have been used and are still in use in dance performances rather than in music concerts. He is considered to have been an innovative scholar in music and dance and is said to have composed his lyrics for the dance performances in the courts where he was honoured. Many innovations in South Indian classical music and dance are attributed to him. His padams form a very significant part of the repertoire not only of the Devadasis or the temple-dancers, but also of the court-dancers and the prostitute dancers. Through South Indian classical dance performances of Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam, Kshetrayya's padams got wide popularity in modern times.

Kshetrayya's padams are seen as a confluence of music, dance and poetic arts. These padams are studied as literature from the point of view of *madhura bhakti* and *nayika-nayaka bhavas* discussed in Sanskrit poetics. Kshetrayya is admired for his ability in bringing out the most subtle and delicate aspects of the moods, states and feelings of feminine romance.

Four of his padams are given below:

1

(Ragam: Yadukula Kambhoji; Talam: Adi)

Maid, how handsome is my lord ! He's beside me;  
 Movva<sup>1</sup> Gopala ever pleases me !  
 Maid, how handsome is my lord ! He's by my side;  
 Movva Gopala ever pleases me !

He has a gentle smile and delicious words,  
 Shining cheeks glistening like mirror,  
 Lips that in delicacy excel tender leaves,  
 And eyes resembling white lotus petals.

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1. wearing a bunch of three dancing bells; or belonging to Movvapuri, the place to which Kshetrayya belongs.

Maid, how handsome is my lord ! He's beside me;  
 Movva Gopala ever pleases me !  
 Tender-aged is he with eye-brow  
 Excelling the crescent moon  
 And in beauty like the love-god's sire  
 With complexion of lustrous semi-black.

Maid, how handsome is my lord ! He's besides me;  
 Movva Gopala ever pleases me !

With feet resembling the red lotuses;  
 His slender middle like a youthful lion's;  
 And arms like an elephant's trunk;  
 Maid, how charming is Movva Gopala !  
 Maid, how handsome is my lord ! He's besides me;  
 Movva Gopala ever pleases me !

## 2

(Ragam: Mohana; Talam: Jhampa)

The damsel left her mansion erotic,  
 Telling her divine lover, "It's day-break !"  
 The damsel left her mansion erotic  
 Telling her divine lover, "It's day-break !"

With pleated hair loosening fragrant flowers,  
 Her necklace strings caught in a knot,  
 With heavy eyes enveloping sleep,  
 Fine fragrance bespeaking of dalliance,  
 Bright rubies of lips like just-sprouted leaves  
 Half-revealed breasts bearing tell-tale nail-prints

The damsel left her mansion erotic  
 Telling her divine lover, "It 's day-break !"

With the delicious fatigue of vigorous love-making,  
 Dishevell'd hair and sari deflected from breast,  
 Saying, "Oh, Lord Movva Gopala ! It's day-break !"  
 The damsel left the mansion erotic,  
 Telling her divine lover "It's day-break !"

3

(Ragam: Mukhari; Talam: Adi)

How many things shall I appreciate ? How well can I praise ?  
You have extended me ten thousand favours !  
How many things shall I appreciate ? How well can I praise ?  
You have extended me ten thousand favours !

1. Is it for serving as a boat to cross the ocean  
Of my longing with my head pillowed on your breast ?  
Or rushing to give my mind cool comfort ?

How many things shall I appreciate ? How well can I praise ?  
You have extended me ten thousand favours !

2. Dear ! Is it for relieving my fears  
As I lay pining for you day and night ?  
Or for comforting me with a sweet kiss  
When I was fried in hot moon-light ?

How many things shall I appreciate ? How well can I praise ?  
You have extended me ten thousand favours !

3. Is it for inviting me with a smile  
Saying, "Come, Movva Gopala, " and locking me in sweating  
embrace,

Or for saying, " Don't be angry ! I believe you,"  
When I did not speak to you in anger ?

How many things shall I appreciate ? How well can I praise ?  
You have extended me ten thousand favours !

4

Go away ! Don't chatter ! Why should he come ? Tell him  
not to come !  
Gone is that era. It's new birth now !  
Go away ! Don't chatter ! Why should he come ? Tell him  
not to come !  
Gone is that era. It's new birth now !

1. Thinking that he'll come today or tomorrow  
I spent scorching moon-lit nights many;

Heaving hot sighs and lips dried up, my maid !  
 What's the use of such words ?  
 Go away ! Don't chatter ! Why should he come ? Tell him not to come !  
 Gone is that era. It's new birth now !

3. For my lover I looked at the approaches and got disgusted;  
 And I feel tired, restraining the love uncontrollable !  
 Biding my time listening to the prattle of parrots  
 I spent springs galore ! No more of such things !  
 Go away ! Don't chatter ! Why should he come ? Tell him not to come !  
 Gone is that era. It's new birth now !
4. Maid ! Fondly hoping that Movva Gopala would come, I consulted  
 omens  
 And felt forlorn when I saw other women with their husbands !  
 Go away ! Don't chatter ! Why should he come ? Tell him not to come !  
 Gone is that era. It's new birth now !

From *Muvv: Gopala Padalu*, 17th century

Tr. by I. V. Chalapati Rao

## Devotional Poems

### RAMADASU

RAMADASU (Rāmadasu, 17th century) is the name by which Kancherla Gopanna, one of the most popular poet-singers of Andhra Pradesh, is popularly known. This name meaning a servant of Rama may either indicate his fame as a staunch devotee of Rama or may have come in the tradition of names such as Kabir Das, Sur Das and Purandara Dasa.

He was a Tahasildar or revenue official under Tan-e-Sha, the Nawab of Golconda, during the second half of the seventeenth century. He was imprisoned by Tan-e-Sha for having diverted the revenue collections towards the construction of a huge Rama temple at Bhadrachalam. According to the story, Shri Rama and Lakshmana appeared in front of Tan-e-sha in the form of two young boys and paid the money due from Gopanna and secured his release from prison.

Devotional lyrics composed and sung by Ramadasu are popular among the masses throughout Andhra Pradesh. They are called *Ramadasu Keertanalu* and are used in the folk tradition as bhajans. Ramadasu is considered to have composed a Shatakam or a bunch of 100 verses known as *Dasharathee Shatakam*. This Shatakam is so named because of the refrain *Dasharathee ! Karunapayonidhi!* (O Son of Dasaratha, Ocean of Grace !), found at the end of each of these one hundred verses. This is one of the most popular Bhakti Shatakams in Telugu.

The lyrical literature composed by poet-singers and meant to be performed only through musical singing is classified as *Pada Sahityam* in Telugu. A *keertana* is a genre of *Pada Sahityam* and is categorized as such on the basis of the greater priority to the literary than to the musical component in it. Music (*raga* or melody and *tala* or rhythm) complements the expressional part of a *keertana* in its effective performance. Ramadasu's lyrics are called Keertanas only on this basis. They are known for their sweet and simple expression and are used more in the folk tradition of bhajans than in classical Carnatic music concerts. Still, it should be noted that Ramadasu's lyrics became popular in the non-Telugu speaking world only through Carnatic music.

Two of his devotional poems are given below:

1

(Ragam: Dhanyasi; Talam: Adi)

In finding the desired mantra of deliverance<sup>1</sup>  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !  
In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !

1. Don't fall into temptation, brother !  
And get duped by any other;  
No need to make long journeys either  
To a hundred and eighty Tirupatis<sup>2</sup>, brother !

In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !

2. Fondly to bathe what use is there  
In sacred rivers everywhere ?  
Can you escape the whirls and eddies  
Of life, in the coming difficult days ?

In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !

3. God Almighty is the One and Only  
Seen with the awareness of births many

---

1. Taraka Mantra: Sacred words of supernatural power which will bring deliverance or liberation (Moksha). It is Rama Mantra.

2. Tirupati: The abode of God Venkateswara in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh.

**I heard the story of the Supreme Incarnation  
God that exists in all forms of creation.**

**In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !**

- 4. In this very birth you will be free, sure  
From all the sins committed in births galore  
It's the last of all your births, brother,  
True, after this you need not brother !**

**In finding the sacred mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !**

- 5. With the clear mind inward-turn'd  
Remaining in a state of joy perpetual  
Keeping all actions at a distance  
And focussing attention on deliverance !**

**In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, my brother !**

- 6. Never deviating from righteousness  
Ever faithful to Rama in his consciousness,  
Ramadas kept the secret of the sacred mantra,  
Forever installed in his heart's temple.**

**In finding the desired mantra of deliverance  
I am indeed fortunate, O my brother !**

## 2

(Ragam: Nandanamakriya; Talam: Adi)

**O Rama ! the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !  
How can I swim across the ocean of life,  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !**

- 1. You, the son of Raghu and the divine spouse of Sita !  
And Protector of the good, Rama !  
Embodiment of compassion and the goal of devotees,  
Blessed is she who gave birth to you !**

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !  
How can I swim across the ocean of life  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !

2. I already declared with delight  
That you are my Master  
Forget not to favour me  
I seek refuge in you !

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !  
How can I cross the ocean of life ?  
O Lotus-eyes Rama !

3. In ignorance I committed evil deeds.  
Don't blame me, O Rama !  
Alleviate my poverty  
O Rama, the chief of all gods.

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you will treat me with kindness !  
How can I cross the ocean of life,  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !

4. That you are Guru and God in my mind,  
All great shastras affirm, O Rama !  
I grew wicked having failed to know  
That Guru is God Himself, O Rama !

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !  
How can I cross the ocean of life,  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !

5. O Rama, you will fill the whole universe  
And cosmos infinite with your presence !  
It will indeed bring eternal joy.  
If we recite your name in our minds !

— O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !



How can I swim across the ocean of life ?  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !

6. You are adored by Indra, Brahma and all angels;  
You have built the great bridge binding the ocean,  
Possessing all the shining virtues;  
You are the Lord of Bhadrachalam, O Rama !

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty—  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness.  
How can I swim across the ocean of life ?  
O Lotus-eyed Rama!

7. Protector of Ramadas, praised by Indra,  
Salutations to you, Rama of Ayodhya !  
Worshipp'd by your servants, give us succour,  
O Son of Dasaratha ! Raghu Rama !

O Rama, the best of the Surya dynasty !  
I wonder how you'll treat me with kindness !  
How can I swim across the ocean of life ?  
O Lotus-eyed Rama !

From *Ramadasu Kirtanalu*, 17th century

Tr. by I. V. Chalapati Rao

## Selected Verses

### Vemana

VEMANA is the most popular versifier of Telugu literature whose verses with messages of morals and spirituality are part of the oral tradition throughout Andhra Pradesh. He may be considered as one of the mystic poet-singers of the medieval times who moved the society with their pungent social criticism blended in satire and analogies and their progressive approach to social norms and spiritual practice. But he stands distinct among these radical saints of those times on the basis of his medium 'padyam' (verse) since the general medium of the mystic poet-singers was 'tatvam' (a mystic lyrical song). There is a tradition of compiling hundred verses of Vemana into a satakam (anthology of 100 verses) and this satakam used to form part of the curriculum of traditional 'under-the-tree' schools of the pre-English times throughout Andhra Pradesh and as part of this curriculum these verses are considered as verses of ethical message. Apart from the curriculum-learning, the verses are learnt and quoted in the oral tradition by common public of all classes, genders and ages. In the oral tradition, hundreds of verses are in vogue with the same end-refrain 'Viswadabhirama vinura Vema' which is used as the mark of identity for all the Vemana's verses. Researchers do

not accept all these verses as actually those of Vemana. There have been several attempts to fish out the original Vemana's verses from the available ones.

The end-refrain is not yet interpreted to the complete satisfaction and consensus among scholars. Especially, the first phrase 'Visvadabhirama' remained mysterious. The second half of the end-refrain 'Vinura Vema' means 'listen oh Vema':

There are two versions of Vemana's biography connected with interpretation of the end-refrain, in vogue, in oral tradition. According to the first one Vemana's actual name was Vemareddy and he was the spoilt child of rich landlord. After spending his prime youth in a sensual life, he got vazed and turned into a renounced yogi. According to this version, the words 'visvads' and 'abhirama', found in the end refrain, are the names of his most beloved girlfriend and his alchemist friend respectively.

According to the second version, Vemana was an alchemist goldsmith and achievement of 'the Gold' turned him into a saint. 'Visvadabhirama' simply means 'pleaser of the world.' However, Vemana is a legendary mystic of the seventeenth century during which period moral degradation, political instability and interest in spiritual and occult practices were dominant trends of the social milieu.

Vemana's verses are known for their straightforward, lucid and simple expression of social criticism blended in catching analogies and subtle satire.

### Vemana's Verses

#### 1

Salt and camphor both have the same look,  
But tastes are not the same there if you look,  
Saints among men can be picked oh! you look  
Vema ! oh! listen oh! pleaser of the world !

#### 2

What for's the custom when pure self is lacking  
What for's the cooking when pure bowl is lacking  
What for's the worship when pure heart is lacking  
Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

#### 3

Nā need to claim the top at a place wrong  
Ye play you low though there that's nothing wrong

Mountain in a glass's small isn't it (though strong) ?  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 4

To find the wrong are herds and crowds there  
 Everyone's wrong on earth no one to spare  
 Wrong finders their wrong never care  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 5

A son if he doesn't love his parents  
 His birth who desires his death who laments !  
 Insects in the mud are born and die who comments !  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 6

Insect in the root makes the whole tree spoiled  
 Insects of the crop make the whole plant spoiled  
 Wickedly person makes a good one spoiled  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 7

If back of the rich person inches slightly sure  
 News in the world makes a big tour  
 No one even knows the marriage of the poor  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 8

Knowing several tongues and costumes saffron dress  
 Do not get you free from the worldly mess.  
 If you shave your head, does it shave your thoughts ?  
 Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

## 9

If you sing and sing the tunes get sweter  
 If you eat and eat the neem gets sweeter

All the works on earth on practice are achieved,  
Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

10

Barren cow to milk a pot if one takes  
Doesn't give the milk the teeth to fall it makes  
Stingy one to ask the same use it makes  
Vema ! oh! listen oh ! pleaser of the world !

From *Vemana* 17th century.

Tr. by P. Nagaran

## Hymns

### TYAGARAJU

TYAGARAJU (Tyāgarāju, 1767-1847) was born at Tiruvarur near Tanjore in Tamil Nadu, into a Telugu family which migrated to Tamil Nadu from the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Six to seven hundred of his devotional lyrics, dedicated to Lord Shri Rama, are available today. His songs are referred to as *kritis* to indicate the dominance of musical element in their performance. It is said that the school of classical Indian music, which is referred to as Carnatic music today, took its present shape only during the days of Tyagaraju and the musical compositions of Tyagaraju contributed greatly to the evolution of this school. Apart from the *kritis* Tyagaraju composed three operas called *Prahladabhakti-vijayamu*, *Sitaramavijayamu* and *Noukacharitramu*. The evolution of *pada* or devotional lyric reached its final stage in the *kritis* composed by Tyagaraju.

Six of his padas are given here:

1

(Ragam: Jayantashri; Talam: Deshadi)

Why do you hide ? O Raghava:

Why do you hide ? O Raghava:

You are the whole creation, moving and motionless,

With the sun and the moon as your eyes !

Why do you hide ? O Raghava !

Why do you hide ? O Raghava !

Searching well in my inner mind  
 I could find that you are everything;  
 I can't think of any one but you;  
 Be my saviour, you, whom Tyagaraju adores !

Why do you hide ? O Raghava !  
 Why do you hide ? O Raghava !

## 2

(Ragam: Sama; Talam: Deshadi)

One may possess wife and children, grain and riches,  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !

Even if one is self-restrained or is a philosopher  
 Sans peace there is little joy  
 O Lotus-eyed One !

1. One may possess wife and children, grain and riches,  
 Fair fortune of prayer and penance !  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !
2. Even if one performs rituals and sacrifices,  
 And knowledge of the heart's nature possesses,  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !
3. Proficient though one be in *Agama Shastras*<sup>1</sup>  
 And win wide acclaim as God's devotee,  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !
4. Shri Raghava, king of kings !  
 One who is adored by Tyagaraju !  
 One whose grace protects the good !  
 Sans peace there's little joy !  
 O Lotus-eyed One !

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1. The science dealing with the procedures of divine worship and allied matters.

3

(Ragam: Jaganmohini; Talam: Rupakam)

O Mind ! Worship the Seven Notes that shine;  
O Mind ! Worship the splendid *sapta swaras*<sup>1</sup> that shine  
In the navel, heart, throat, tongue and nose and other organs  
O Mind ! Worship the Seven Tunes that shine.

Residing in Rig, Sama and other Vedas<sup>2</sup> on the earth  
In the heart of sacred Gayatri<sup>3</sup>  
In the minds of angels of heaven and earth  
And in the blessed souls like Tyagaraju.  
O Mind ! Worship the Seven Notes that shine.

4

(Ragam: Dhanyasi; Talam: Deshadi)

What way to salvation exists, O Mind !  
Other than true knowledge of devotional music ?  
What way to salvation exists, O Mind ?  
Other than true knowledge of devotional music ?

As practised by Bhrungi, 'Shiva, Hanuman,  
Agastya, Matanga, Narada and the like,  
What way to salvation exists, O Mind !  
Other than true knowledge of devotional music ?

By music Tyagaraju knows the difference between right and wrong,  
That this visible world is wrapp'd in illusion,  
And music is the instrument to conquer  
The six enemies<sup>5</sup> born of the evil body !

5

(Ragam: Abheri; Talam: Adi)

I couldn't get a glimpse of your smiling face:  
Won't you pity and extend your grace ?

- 
1. Seven notes of the octave.
  2. The four Vedas (Rig; Sama; Yajur; Adharvana).
  3. A sacred-mantra associated with the Sun-God.
  4. A sage
  5. Lust, Anger, Desire for money, Desire for material things, Pride and Jealousy.

I couldn't get a glimpse of your smiling face:  
Won't you pity and extend your grace ?

1. O Lifter of the great mountain:<sup>1</sup> Won't all your servants convey the message ?  
Will they be like this ?  
I couldn't get a glympse of your smiling face :  
Won't you pity and exent your grace ?
2. Couldn't Garuda<sup>1</sup> come fast on receiving your command ?  
Did he complain about the vast distance between earth and heaven ?  
To whom else can I complain ? O Supreme One ! Lord of the Uni verse !

Don't be playful ! Hardly can I wait:  
Protect me, O the one ever praised by Tyagaraju !

I couldn't get a glimpse of your smiling face  
Won't you pity and extend your grace ?

6

(Ragam: Goulipantu; Talam: Adi)

Lift the inner veil of jealousy, Tirupati Venkata Ramana !  
Lift the inner veil of jealousy, Tirupati Venkata Rmana !

It's expelling Righteousness and Realization

Lift the inner veil of jealousy  
Tirupati Venkata Ramana !

1. It's like the fly that irritates us at dinner-time  
When we sit comfortably to eat !  
It's like the mind at prayer-time  
Straying into low thoughts !

Lift the inner veil of jealousy,  
Tirupati Venkata Ramana !

2. It's like the hungry fish caught by the angler's hook !  
It's like the screen obstructing the clear light of the lamp !

Lift the inner veil of jealousy,  
Tirupati Venkata Ramana !

---

1. Krishna who lifted Hount Govardhana.

3. It's like the deer being caught in a net:  
Haven't I implicitly obeyed your will ?  
O the One adored by Tyararaja !  
Lift the inner veil of jealousy,  
Tirupati Venkata Ramana !<sup>1</sup>

From *Tyagaraja Kritalu*. 18th-19th century.

*Tr.* by I. V. Chalapati Rao

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1. Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati.



# Medieval Urdu Literature

## Ghazals

### AMIR KHUSRAU

AMIR KHUSRAU (Amīr Khusro, 1253-1325) was a famous Persian saint-poet, who wrote poetry with a mystical verve. The following is the only Urdu ghazal of his that has come down to us; it contains both Persian and Brij Bhasha in alternate lines.

Forget me not, the sorrowful,  
Talk to me with your eyes; dear heart,  
I cannot bear the sorrow of parting,  
Keep me well within your heart.

Long as tresses the night of parting,  
The day of love is short as life,  
If I see not my love, O friend,  
How can I spend dark nights of grief?

Two magic eyes with a hundred charms  
Have put my sad heart's rest to flight;  
Now who would care to go and tell  
Dear love of my sad and lonely plight?

As a candle lit, as an atom struck  
No sleep in my eyes, no rest in my heart  
Banished, alas, from that moon's grace  
He sends no news, nor shows his face.

On the day of love, for truth, Khusro  
The loved one tricked me and went away  
If I could find him, I will keep  
Him in my heart with love always.

## Ghazals

### BAHAUDDIN BAJAN

BAHAUDDIN BAJAN (Bahauddin Bājan, 1388-1506) was one of the early writers in Urdu, whose works bear testimony to the growth and development of the language, as their sayings and dohas carried the message of Sufi mysticism to the wider populace. Seven of his pieces are given below :

1

Whoever remains with Allah  
Allah will be his and the world.

2

His heart's desires will be fulfilled  
And none can kill him ever.

3

I drink cupfuls of love's potion  
And fire of love I consume.

4

My heart laments to see and touch  
The marble cut-work of the holy Prophet's tomb.

5

This is a beggar  
Asking for alms  
He can get solace  
Only here.

6

Please give him health  
And long life  
And livelihood vast  
And will to offer Namaz.

## 7

Kindly call this man  
 Closer, he is Bajan  
 Please glance at him  
 For once!

*Uqdas*, 14th-16th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

### Raja's Account to his Rani

FAKHR DIN NIZAMI

FAKHR DIN NIZAMI (15th century) is the famous author of the masnavi or verse tale *Kadam Rao Padam Rao* written between 1421 and 1434. The words spoken by the king to his queen when he found himself betrayed are given below. Nizami wrote in Gujri style.

## 1

I had heard of the vile tricks  
 Of women, which are many  
 I witnessed some of them today  
 Though before I hadn't seen any.

## 2

I was stunned to see  
 Those tricks a female played  
 An ugly sight was it to which  
 A witness I was made.

## 3

I saw a highborn snake queen  
 Mating with a lowborn snake  
 Entwined in evil union  
 They played the hug-and-shake.

## 4

I have some duties to do  
 Since God has made me the king  
 Now, how can I tolerate  
 Any such evil thing?

5

So, I drew my sword  
And made a fierce attack  
On that very spot  
Was killed the male snake.

6

The female snake fled  
And managed to save her life  
She saved her life, yet  
She had to lose her tail.

7

Since then I have resolved  
Never to trust a woman  
Never to get beguiled  
Never to her incline.

8

How that female snake  
With the male didn't stay  
Leaving him alone in danger  
She herself ran away.

9

Having seen this, my heart  
Abhors the woman's name  
Though fairies they may be  
I would never trust them.

10

Anyone of female species  
If ever did I accost  
I won't care a dime for her  
Even if my life was lost.

## 11

One who has been bitten by snake  
 You ponder for a while  
 Well, why should not be that fellow  
 Scared of a rope-coil?

## 12

Now, Fakhr Din, have you seen  
 How that unfair king  
 Brought misery to his beloved queen  
 Though she did wrong nothing.

From *Kadam Rao Padam Rao*, 15th century

Tr. by Ifran Siddiqui

## A Verse Tale

## SHAMSUL-USHSHAQ MIRANJI

SHAMSUL-USHSHAQ MIRANJI (Şamsul-Uşşak Miranji, ? -1496) is the author of the verse tale *Khush Naghz*. The passage given below is a dialogue between love and wisdom.

## 1

Pleasure said: Love is greater or wisdom, Miranji tell me.  
 This guide said: I'll tell you, listen to me carefully.

## 2

Give the ears of your heart to these pious words of mine  
 How can wisdom know why heart with love-spark smolders.

## 3

Wisdom is the minister who so says to Love, O King  
 If you don't speak or listen to me, I'm just nothing.

## 4

Love says: O wisdom why do you worry to know the secret  
 Coyness to the bride belongs and service to the hand-maid.

5

Wisdom says without make-up how can a woman attract  
Love says without God's help, you cannot know the secret.

6

Wisdom says these things are difficult to understand  
Love says it is better to surrender soul than to bear pain.

7

This dialogue of Love and Wisdom, I told pleasure, whole  
Whoever knows this secret will be a special soul.

From *Khush Naghz*, 15th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## Dohas

### KABIR DAS

KABIR DAS (Kabīr Dās, 1440-1518) was a great saint-poet of the bhakti cult. He is well-known for his dohas and chaupaies in Brij Bhasha and Sadhukari dialects. The poem given below employs the Persian form of the ghazal.

I live in a state of frenzied love,  
I've no concern with consciousness;  
Or in the world, or free from it,  
I feel for it no friendliness.

Those who are parted from their loves  
Search for them from door to door;  
But I seek not; my love resides  
Within my own heart's hidden core.

The world calls him by many names,  
And looks for Him in vain, in vain;  
But my own Guru's name is true;  
I care not for the world's domain.

I do not part from love awhile,  
 The loved one does not part from me;  
 For I love Him and Him alone,  
 So why should I impatient be?

Kahir, in the way of love  
 You should discard duality;  
 When you must tread this narrow path,  
 No burden should seem heavy.

*Dohas*, 15th-16th century

Tr. by Ahmed Ali

## Works of Truth

### BURHANUDDIN JANAM

BURHANUDDIN JANAM (? - 1582) was the son of the noted Gujri saint poet Shams-ul-Ushshaq of Bijapur. He was a great Sufi and poet in his own right. His prose works *Kalimat-ul-Haqaiq* and *Asrar-ul-Wajood* are well known. *Kalimat-ul-Haqaiq* is the oldest available specimen of Urdu prose.

Whatever God wills happens since He alone is Almighty and Creator of even the oldest of the old. (O God) Your space is incorporeal and even the air in its lightness is heavier than it. You were present when there was nothing. You have no partner. This truth can be perceived only through Your grace and kindness. And by Your grace this book in Gujri, named *Kalimat-ul-Haqaiq*, so vividly describes the truth of God's eternity, through questions and answers. I shall, if God Almighty so wills, clearly describe the facts about His being and His attributes, the origin and the end of all beings, eternal or temporal, old and new, concrete and abstract and show that God Almighty is Omniscient and His sight scans all that is created while we the creatures cannot see Him.

From *Kalimat-ul-Haqaiq*, 16th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## Three Poems

### MOHAMMAD AFZAL

MOHAMMAD AFZAL (? - 1625) is the reputed author of *Bikat Kahani*, which presents a good example of Barah Masa or twelve months, expressing the feelings of a beloved in separation. Three excerpts, one each on Sawan, Pūsh and Jayth are given below.

1

On Sawan

1

Lo and behold, at last  
The rainy days have come  
And in this month, alas,  
My beau is away from home.

2

Now Sawan's heading on  
Beating its thunder's drum  
My sweetheart gone away  
Who can be now my chum ?

3

Papiha, the bird of rains,  
Calls out night and day  
When the toad cries hoarse  
Cricket, too, joins the fray.

4

The heavy, dark clouds  
To every side spread  
Like legions of separation  
They swiftly march ahead.

5

O chum, when the cuckoo sings  
Its song of deep desire  
With every soaring note  
My body gets afire.

6

In rainy nights dark  
The glow-worms come to play,  
O chum, these twinkling things  
On my fire put the hay.



7

As I hear from the woods  
 The peacock making its cries  
 All calm from my heart goes  
 And my composure flies.

8

The whole earth is water-soaked,  
 The world looks lush and green;  
 My hope to meet my darling burns  
 As a plant dried-up and lean.

9

All these dames with their beaus  
 Enjoy the swing with glee  
 And my body's consumed  
 By the flames of envy.

10

Sawan's on its way out  
 My darling's yet not come  
 On him what witches have cast  
 Their evil spell, O chum ?

*Bikat Kahani: Sawan, 16th-17th century*

*Tr: by Irfan Siddiqui*

II

On Pūsh

1

Now comes the month of Pūsh  
 The painful Aghan is past  
 I long to meet my friend  
 Forlorn and downcast.

2

Thick mist is covering the earth  
 Making my body shiver

How ill-timed has been  
O chum, my love-affair.

3

With their lovers all dames  
For merry-making assemble  
And here, poor me, O God!  
I'm all alone to tremble.

4

In the fire of separation  
My body's burnt to coal  
This month, each day has been  
For me like a year whole.

5

Of living through this month  
I have no hope at all  
Tell me whom shall I approach  
My parted friend to call.

6

My life is naught, O chum,  
In the absence of my friend  
I want someone through whom  
My homage to him I send.

7

I saw not for a while  
The young face of my dear  
And still, all the time,  
I may not live, I fear.

8

By agony of separation  
Have been under siege I

You gave me birth at all  
Why, dear mother, Oh why?

9

The grief has pitched the tent  
In my life's pale  
Pray you go to my darling  
Go, tell him soon my tale

10

Or else the essence of life  
Would leave this earthly frame  
And in fire of grief, would  
My vitals be aflame.

11

O my dear soothsayer,  
See what will happen to me  
When shall I meet my darling?  
Please take your book and see.

12

Please do make me such a charm  
So my darling comes back  
And if you don't do that  
You'll give me a heart-break.

13

It will be a gracious act  
If you do as I pray  
It will be a gift of life  
To one who is dead, I say.

14

Now, O my dear wizards,  
Some words of magic tell,

As bring to me my friend  
Please chant such a spell.

15

This grief of mine, O chum,  
How long shall I narrate?  
I'll bear the pain, I wonder  
How long, how far, how late?

16

Please go and bring him round  
Please take his hand in hand  
On his feet put your head  
And say this to my friend.

17

That, "go take care of her  
She's losing her life fast  
Just visit the loony once  
And make her patience last."

18

Now Pūsh is almost out  
And nothing have I gained  
Sleepless, I could not share  
The bridal-bed with my friend.

*Bikat Kahani: Pūsh*, 16th-17th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

III

On Jayth

1

Now simmering Jayth is on  
The sun is harsh and hot  
O chum, I roam about  
So baffled and distraught.

2

For me the fire of grief  
Is there to burn and torch,  
And then, hot winds of summer  
Are roving on to scorch.

3

Look, how these lovely dames  
Have set their couch of joy  
And over the couch they swarm  
Around their beau boy.

4

O chum, this season only those  
Who have their sweethearts home  
Can have the real pleasure of  
A chamber, cool and calm.

5

And there am I, bare-foot  
Under the scorching sun  
In hot pursuit of parted beau  
From home to home I run.

6

In seething sun at noon  
I suffer all sorts of pain  
And wander through the woods  
In pursuit of my swain.

7

Boils are on my head  
And blisters in my soles  
Blood-stream on my body  
From top to bottom rolls.

8

O Death, I beseech you  
A quicker pace to make  
Take life from my body  
I pray you, for God's sake.

9

O chum, may someone go  
And tell this to my friend  
To that unfaithful man  
Who has been so unkind.

10

I lost eleven months  
Waiting and crying for you  
Why did not you come back  
Tell me, my cruel beau.

11

Now, sweetheart, if you want  
Your good in the world to come  
It's time you showed to me  
Your lovely face, back home.

12

If not, well, choice is yours  
You know what there can be  
For hereinafter I may sue  
You before the Almighty.

*Bikat Kahani: Jayth, 16th-17th century*

*Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui*

## Levels and Kinds of Being

### KHUB MUHAMMAD CHISHTI

KHUB MUHAMMAD CHISHTI ( ? - 1614) was one of the most revered Sufi saints of Gujarat. He was a scholar and writer in Persian too. He is famous for his masnavi

or verse tale *Khub Tarang* (1578). It is an academic discourse on mysticism and ethics written in the Gujri style.

There's only One who exists:  
and how great is His glory,  
how great His tasks!  
You must first know Him.  
He is Existence by Himself,  
There's no roof above His ceiling,  
He is Roof-Sky in His own Self;  
A Being that needs no ceiling.

Now know the second Existent:  
Know that one to be of the mind.  
It has been given the name of Attributes.  
Reach up to the attributes, and only then  
You shall find the Being.  
You cannot grasp how  
He has sight, and hearing;  
Mental being has, of necessity,  
a limit, a boundary.

Now there exists yet  
a third Glory—  
I'll speak of it now, so  
lend me your ears.  
These are called existent-relative,  
The Names of God are their name.  
When the relatives are seen  
as Pure Beings, they are then called  
Names of God; and when  
They are seen as appearances,  
then every one knows their names.

For example, the abstract names  
of clods of earth are myriad in many tongues;  
and when the clods of earth  
have a place, and an appearance,  
we invent numerous names for them.  
It's the same as the mirror  
in which every one sees their own reflection.  
Now suppose there is someone  
who exists in the form of a body—

How well the body overcomes  
the apparent, and is known, whatever  
guise it may take!  
So why is this form, that exists  
actually in the mind, so soft, and malleable,  
like the wax ?

He who understands the malleability  
(of forms) will grasp the wax of which  
Being is formed.

The soft, fine, malleable wax  
is deceptive, and leads you astray.  
Whose is this existence-relative  
that gives a waxen roof  
to the narrow path of life?

Know every existent  
by their difference: know  
the attributes from the relatives.  
May God vouchsafe you comprehension  
of finer points, and may you be  
granted higher levels of being  
by the One Being.  
Be assured of existence to be  
nothing but the Existent:  
Beyond the One Being  
are neither you nor I.  
You see nothing here  
but the attributes of The Existent—  
Understand that nothing exists but The One.

When you speak of the Attributes  
of Being, then you understand  
the glory of your house, and of His tasks.  
Then why not speak of the Being  
of God? When is Nothingness not Being?  
In the dark night of the season  
Of rains, close your eyes tight—  
you'll see nothing but darkness,  
how many times over you may cry:  
"Light! there's light!"



Do you now understand  
 'The Beauty and the Glory?  
 No? I'll say it again—  
 Listen carefully:  
 Being and Nothingness are relative;  
 None explain these things so well  
 as the friends of God.'

From *Khub Tarang*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

## Ghazal

### MOHAMMAD QULI QUTUB SHAH

MOHAMMAD QULI QUTUB SHAH (16th-17th century) was the fifth king of his dynasty at Golconda. He ruled from 1580 to 1611 and composed more than a thousand couplets. Most of these are in Dakhani Urdu. He also wrote in Persian and Telugu. His ghazals are marked by a tenderness inspired by the landscape of Deccan.

In the absence of my love  
 I cannot drink the cup;  
 I cannot live a while  
 In the absence of my love.

Be patient in love's absence,  
 I counselled so my self.  
 I found that it was easy  
 To say, but not to act.

The one who is devoid  
 Of love is blind indeed;  
 Not even by mistake  
 Desire his company.

O Quli Qutub Shah,  
 In vain you give advice;  
 You only waste your words  
 On those who live in frenzy.

*Ghazal*, 16th-17th century

Tr. by Ahmed Ali

## Ghazals

HASAN SHAUQI

Five Complats by HASAN SHAUQI (? — 1633) are given below:

1

If my darling invites me  
I'll go walking on eyes, not feet  
I'll keep awake till doomsday  
If he keeps me embraced in bed.

2

From India to remote Khorasan  
It is fragrance everywhere  
Can you find anyone else attired in flowers  
Like my lord of sweet scents ?

3

Let him have a draught  
From your sweet lips  
Shauqi is in a swoon

4

As your cheeks shine  
In the night of your tresses  
Some say it is Moon, some that it is Venus  
Still others it is Jupiter.

5

O the waft of spring-time  
If you just happen to pass  
Through the rose-garden of love  
Please let me know how is my friend.

## The Tales of a Parrot

GHAVVASI

GHAVVASI (17th century) wrote two poems, *Qissa-e-Saif-ul-Muluk-o-Badi-ul-Jamal* (14000 lines long) and *Tuti Nama* (Tūti Nāma, The Tales of a Parrot). The former is based on a story in the *Arabian Nights*, the latter ultimately derived from *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha*. He also wrote ghazals, qasidas and marsiyas.

There was a merchant, Be-Nazir name  
And he had a parrot wise and tame.

A loyal bird it was, sweet-tongued and gay  
It would know the unknown things and soothsay.

It acted in his house as a watch-and-ward  
And reported all things, fair and foul, to its lord.

One day, the merchant to deal in his ware  
Set out on a journey to some place somewhere.

But early from there he could not return  
Back home his lousy wife would toss and turn.

Now there lived a fair youth somewhere around  
Whom as her secret lover she found.

She called him to her house as and when desired  
On a flower-bedecked bed both of them enjoyed.

Their misdeeds the parrot always saw and heard  
But to the woman it would not say a word.

It sat all the while, head nestled in wing  
And kept quiet as if it knew nothing.

When the noble merchant came back at last  
He enquired from the parrot what happened in past.

The bird told him whatever was to tell there  
But his wife's secret it did not lay bare.

But later the secret of his wife's affair  
Was exposed to the merchant by someone somewhere.

Whereupon the merchant severed all bonds of love  
His wife he started to hurt and snub

Now, this fool of a woman who had no shame  
Thought that for her trouble the bird was to blame.

The parrot must have bared the secret, she thought  
And that betrayal had left her hurt and distraught.

Turning furious, she took out the bird from the cage  
And tore apart its feathers and wings in great rage.

The bird was thrown out, so injured and maimed  
For its suffering the woman was not ashamed.

When the merchant asked what had happened to the bird  
Why that sweet-tongued creature was not here to be seen and heard

"Where has gone the parrot, O woman?" said he  
"Why the cage of the bird is empty, tell me."

In reply said this to the merchant that cunning broad,  
"A cat had eaten the bird" and those feathers she showed.

*Tuti Nama*, 17th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazals

### ALI ADIL SHAH II 'SHAHI'

ALI ADIL SHAH II "SHAHI" (17th century) was a prolific writer who wrote ghazals, qasidahs, marsiahs, masnavis and kabit. Three of his ghazals are given below :

In the glow of your brow  
The crescent of your ear-ring shines  
And the neckband, like a halo of moon  
Around comely neck inclines.

Your lovely lips have coats of hues  
 So red and deep and dark  
 They make the poppy-bunches bloom  
 And rose gardens spark.

Your shapely arms in green sleeves  
 And henna-flowers in hand  
 They appear like a bough of blooms  
 When viewed all combined.

*Ghazals*, 17th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## A Verse Tale

### SAN'ATI

SAN'ATI (17th century) was the author of the verse tale *Qissa-e-Benazeer*. The passage given below reveals his mystic bent. He was a court poet of the Bijapur Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah.

O truth-seeker, listen to this carefully,  
 I recall this story this way.

When Tameem Ansari narrated all this before the king Ali Shah,  
 he explained the third condition (of mysticism).

"When after many days I happened to pass through that place,  
 suddenly I came across the waste land.

That land was completely dry and deserted;  
 not a single bird dared to dwell there.

Neither were there any shrubs and brambles, for the livelihood.  
 Nor were there any fountains or meadows.

The terrain was hard and remote,  
 so much soul-melting, as the field on the Day of Resurrection.

On both sides were standing the Arabian and Egyptian thorns,  
 Lacs of them smaller and lacs of them full grown.

If any one dared to step on the shadow  
 the shadow proved to be more painful than the thorn itself.

The whole desert was like a field of diamond,  
Blood was oozing out of the torn flesh of my feet.

There did not come in view any water except dry land,  
my thirst made me restless very much."

From *Qissa-e-Benazeer*, 17th century

Tr. by S.A. Salam

## Hunting and Strolling

### IBN-E-NISHATI

IBN-E-NISHATI (17th century) was the author of *Phul Ban*. It is remarkable for its power of characterization and for its portrayal of social conditions. It narrates a story adapted from Persian. An extract describing hunting and strolling is given below :

As the soul of the king moved into the dead body of the deer as one enters  
into his clothes,  
that dog of a minister, becoming malicious, acted evil.

Beater of this speech started driving off the utterances,  
and applied wings to the bird of expression, to continue the story.

As soon as the lion (Sun), from the low-lying marshy land of the east,  
appeared, spitting out fire from his mouth,

The deer seeing him ran away,  
that moon which used to stroll fearlessly in the desert of the sky.

When hawk (Sun) appeared,  
all the water-fowls (stars) ran away.

The king decided to go for hunting that day,  
To see the flocks of birds and wild animals.

Putting the throne on his head,  
and mounting the horse of imagination,

He started off taking the army along with him  
his minister was also in attendance.

Now, there was a jungle on the way,  
and in that season it was full of flowers and fruits.

That jungle was so dense that, opening its eyes,  
even the Sun could not peep through it.

That (jungle) looked from every side as if  
the sky itself had come down and stood still.

If rain ever happened to penetrate into it,  
it entered with obeisance and went away.

That jungle was so thick all around,  
that in beauty and charm it looked like the sky.

All the flowers there looked like  
the twinkling stars in the sky.

The flock of birds there looked like  
the moving clouds of cotton in the air.

Animals inhabited there  
and flock of birds had covered the open sky.

The king along with his army entered in that jungle  
exactly like stars, and the moon disappeared in the clouds.

Beaters who were experts in their art  
took the wild cat out of the plank

And took off the body-clothes of the elephants from the back and  
loosened the strings from the necks of the tigers,

Removed the coverings from the eyes of the wild cats,  
all this to raise the dust in the herds of the animals.

From *Phul Ban*, 17th century

Tr. by S.A. Salam

## Sab Ras

MULLA ASADULLAH WAJHI

MULLA ASADULLAH "WAJHI" (? - 1659) was both a poet and a prose-writer. He wrote both in Urdu and Persian. *Qutub Mushtani* (1609) is his most important poetical

work while his major prose work is *Sab Ras* (1635). It is an allegorical account of profound mystic experience. He is one of the major Urdu writers of Deccan.

There was a city; its name was Sistan. The name of the king of Sistan was 'Aql' meaning "wisdom; intelligence". Whatever is of the Faith and whatever is of the World functioned as he wished; without his command, not an atom could shift from its place. He who followed his command profited in both worlds, gained a good name here and great honour in the four worlds. He found acceptance everywhere and never encountered any calamity. (As the saying goes) "If one's well, then the world is well." It's foolish to speak evil of someone; any good or evil you do is yours to keep. Not knowing your own faults, you accuse others. One should first find out about oneself and only then cast aspersions on others. He who knows himself, knows everything. Whatever direction one chooses for oneself, one goes in the light of 'Aql'. If Man abandons 'Aql', he becomes mad and smashes his head (against rocks). When one mixes greed with intelligence 'Aql', one loses one's entire worth. Then his true goal falls away from his heart. If you wish to keep your heart alive and gain what you seek, then better not mix greed with intelligence. But if you can, mix courage or "himmat" with intelligence. This is my advice, take it if you're wise. He who follows this path becomes perfect, becomes enlightened and live-hearted. Greed in intelligence is like cotton in silk, like butter-milk in milk, like glass in emeralds, like dirt in syrup, like black cumin in white cumin. He who made his heart alive, found something. He who took a step forward, did something. Manliness and un-manliness are only a step apart. The manly has much to worry about here, while the unmanly is carefree. Ignorant people rejoice, the knowledgeable grieve. Tell me, if someone's heart is killed by greed, how can he do anything. Only that person's heart is alive who possesses passion or *ishq* and courage or *himmat*. His life is truly lived; upon him are all blessings. Just as Hafez has said, opening the doors of our hearts.

"He whose heart comes alive with Love,  
never dies. On the world's tome our  
permanence is firmly affixed."

Be he a common man or someone special, each person must in the end follow what 'Aql' commands. If without 'Aql's' command anyone undertakes any task, his action comes back to him (as his retribution).

"Aql is a falcon, but a falcon that flies very high  
It hunts in both the fields, the Reality and the Metaphor."



## Selections

## MOHAMMAD NUSRAT NUSRATI

MOHAMMAD NUSRAT NUSRATI (? - 1674) was a major poet of the 17th century. His *Gulshan-e-Ishq* (1657) tells the story of Manohar and Madhumati. In addition to masnavis, he has also written ghazals and qasidahs. He was Adil Shah's poet-laureate, and lived at Bijapur at the time of Aurangzeb's conquest.

## i

## Lover's Conflict

## 1

The defences of piety were broken  
The mightier began to overpower.

## 2

In a forceful assault of physical power  
The city of beauty was captured.

## 3

At once he moved forward to conquer  
And vanquished her in a moment.

## 4

His love-key opened the lock of the coffer  
He picked up the pearls of beauty.

## 5

In a masterly show of his art of lancing  
He pinned down his opponent.

## 6

That sorcerer of the land of pleasure  
Took his camel through the needle's eye.

7

Eagerly he caught hold of the rose-bud  
And merrily turned it into a flower.

From *Gulshan-e-Ishq*, 17th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

ii

### Ghazals

1

Since birth Nusrati is famished  
Of beauty he wants a fill  
One who gets a delight like you  
How can he have patience?

2

How smart she is  
For her tender age;  
Hasty in taking away the heart  
But lazy to grant her body's pleasure!

3

If you have to be generous, darling,  
I'm at your command, please hurry!  
But why should you waste time like this,  
Just staring at me?

4

Your cleverness is of no avail  
Before Nusrati's frenzy.  
Since he has been a daring chap  
In the beauties' soiree.

*Ghazals*, 17th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazals

### MIAN MIR HASHMI

**MIAN MIR HASHMI** ( ? - 1699) was a writer of popular ghazals. Seven of them are given below :

1

In the jungle of your beauty  
It was a unique sight  
Two lush pomegranates grew  
On a cypress tree!

2

Your body is a sugarcane  
Having on it two jasmine buds  
Your bosom is a lake  
With two lotuses of breasts.

3

In your green attire, darling,  
Orange-hued brassiere shines  
Your bust-wrap covers your bosom  
Like green leaves hide the fruit.

4

On the date-palm of your youth  
There are two fruits of nectar.

5

Of the garden of your youth  
Hashmi had become the keeper  
There are two juicy fruits  
Grown on the bough of your bust.

6

She keeps singing wherever she goes  
And does not care for men

In the city she is known as  
The smart warbling damsel.

7

Her head-cover is never steady  
Her "Shalwar" slips to the groin  
I have not found her frock-fringe  
Ever covering her waist-line.

*Ghazals*, 17th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazal

ABDUL QADIR BEDIL

ABDUL QADIR BEDIL (Abdul Qādir Bedil, ? - 1720) was a Persian poet of great calibre. Recent research shows that he wrote verses in Urdu too.

Ask me not: What of the heart?  
I cannot ever compare with it.  
The object of this unknown thing  
Has been, alas, beyond my reach.

For when upon the heart's threshold  
Love stood and called for me, the loved  
One called out from behind the veil:  
Here is no Baydil, only me.

*Ghazal*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Ahmed Ali

## A Preface

SYED ABDUL WALI 'UZLAT

Syed Abdul Wali 'Uzlat (1693-1775) wrote both in Urdu and Persian, and lived both in North India and Deccan. He was not only a poet, but a painter, musician and scholar as well and wrote in different genres. His three Urdu masnavis are *Barah Masa*, *Rag Mala* and *Saqi Namah*.

○ Creator of the world, to Thee belong all the attributes, from Genesis to Eternity. We do not have the perception that could make our tongue

pay what is due to Thy greatness. O Master of the two worlds, the purity of Thy Being and Attributes is so beyond the reach of reason that the Gabriel of thought cannot have a relation of nearness to the far-off sky which is Thy Sanctum Sanctorum. Thou alone have known Thy. What more have (we) the ignoramuses to say! Skies bow their heads at Thy Palace of spacelessness. We the worthless ones have only to be swept away by humiliation (if we try to say something).

And the sacred praises are being perpetually showered by Thee on Thee, beloved (Prophet) Mohammad and his progeny, peace be on them. Our asking Thy to bestow praises on them is nothing but the height of insolence. Yet it is only in pursuance of Thy Quranic decree that we pray Thee to send Thy praises to them so that we may also gain from the bounties of those holy souls and, thus, the pure ones among us may also attain piety.

Having offered his humble prayers to Thee and praises to Thy Prophet, this fakir, Syed Abdul Vali Uzlat (may he be pardoned for his sins), son of Syed Sa'adullah (may he be venerated for his pious virtues), says with the tongue of speechlessness that he has collected there burnt-out breaths out of the fire-house of his Hindi collection of verses and consigned them to these pages of incoherent expression so they remain with friends as a memoir of us, who have been forgotten by this world. And all the lines of this collection have been inflamed by the fire of meaning so that the eyes of those attracted by the light of meaning may tearfully remember us. Each couplet (of this collection), in its frenzy in pursuit of meaning, tears down its two lines with both its hands. Every line chains the attention of crazy lovers of frenzied content and raises screams of silence through the voice of burnt-up speech. O Lord of all men make these lines agreeable and pleasant to the broken hearts of all those who think right; in the name of Mohammad, peace be on him, and his great and exalted descendants. The end.

*Deebacha-e-Divan*, 17th-18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

### Three Poems

SYED SADRUDDIN MOHAMMAD KHAN FAEZ

SYED SADRUDDIN MOHAMMAD KHAN FAEZ (1690-1738) was a scholar-poet from the aristocracy. He wrote both in Persian and Urdu. He is famous for his *divan* or collection of ghazals. He is said to have fully absorbed the local tradition. He is also the author of a few short masnavis.

1

Dark beauty! Source of all pleasure!  
 Pass this way too some time;  
 Cast a glance on the weary heart  
 Of one who is sick with love.

Morning breeze, go now  
 To that smiling rose  
 And tell her all about  
 The stricken hearts of lovers.

Faez looks at you  
 And is lost to all things  
 You, whose lips are budding blooms,  
 Are glowing anew every moment.

2

The tinge of *missi* on your red lips—  
 Like a glimpse of sapphire among the rubies.

Lady, you stand in the sun  
 With your face unveiled;  
 Do you want to burn the sun's heart too  
 Like mine?

3

The yellow border on her mauve *chador*—  
 The setting sun against the evening sky.

The tales of Laila-Majnun are cold;  
 It's now our time.

I remember the heart-ache of the time,  
 When the cuckoo was crying his heart out  
 In the mango trees.

## Ghazals

### JAFAR ZATALLI

JAFAR ZATALLI (Jāfar Zatali, 17th-18th century) was an extremely popular poet of Delhi who wrote satirical and humorous verses. He has made valuable contribution to the development of Urdu poetry in Northern India as distinct from the Deccan.

1

Sincerity is gone from the world  
Oh, what an age has come!  
All people are afraid of the oppressor  
Oh, what an age has come!

2

One who is full of cunning  
Is revered by one and all  
None dares to tell the real from the false  
Oh, what an age has come!

3

Backbiters go on backbiting  
And masquers roam about  
Cheats are free to cheat people  
Oh, what an age has come!

4

There are no faithful friends  
Nor loyal brothers around  
Love nowhere is to be found  
Oh, what an age has come!

5

Catamite lads are legions  
That roam about in Delhi  
Shamelessly they get ravished  
Oh, what an age has come!

6

How callous is my master  
My labour all goes waste  
O friend, I cry for help  
Look, this is the joy of service.

7

We are horse-men in name  
Disgusted with this job we are  
O friends we are humbled always  
Look, this is the joy of service.

8

We are Fidai Khan's employees  
And hanker for half a bread  
We obey commands of a cheat  
Look, this is the joy of service.

9

We are given famished mules  
Who keep their tail under rump  
Grocers of bazar laugh at us  
Look, this is the joy of service.

*Ghazals*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazals

### SHAMSUDDIN MOHAMMAD VALI

SHAMSUDDIN MOHAMMAD VALI (Šamsuddīn Mohammad Vālī, 1668-1741) was the last of the great Deccan poets. He visited Delhi towards the end of the 17th century and adopted the idiom of Delhi. His collection of verses reached Delhi in 1720 and was received with high acclaim. His name and the place he belonged to are still a matter of dispute.

1

Cup in hand the bashful beauty



Has come to me.  
O heart, forget now all formality,  
Enraptured be, enraptured be.  
The drinking of the wine of parting's grief  
Has made me ill;  
O beauty, let those wandering eyes of yours  
Be cups of wine, cups of wine.  
How long, O mind, will you build with doubts  
Walls of thorns?  
The raging storm of love is rushing in,  
Be a ruin, be a ruin.

## 2

I saw the beauty of my love  
In a dream:  
It was the glory of my Lord,  
Hidden it seemed.  
To die and then become itself  
The source again,  
This show enacted I have seen  
In a bubble's being.

## 3

Do not be faithless to me,  
Have some fear of God;  
The world will laugh at me,  
Have some fear of God.  
Be not proud to see  
Your face in the looking glass;  
Be not vain, my love,  
Have some fear of God.

## 4

Whenever I remember  
That rose of faith's rose garden,  
The tears well up in my eyes,  
And endlessly flow on,  
Within the void beauty

was free of all desire;  
 Appearing in human form  
 It is love it now desires.  
 The anguished on heart seek nothing  
 But agony and pain;  
 O king of frenzy, come  
 To the wastes of grief again.

5

Beware of my heart: it is  
 An aimless wanderer;  
 And in the garden where  
 The beauties dwell,  
 An admirer.  
 O Vali, the only place  
 For a lover is  
 The lane of the well-beloved,  
 Or a corner full  
 Of silences.

*Ghazals*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Ahmed Ali

## Ghazals

SIRAJUDDIN ALI KHAN ARZOO

SIRAJUDDIN ALI KHAN ARZOO (1688-1756), also known as Khan-e-Arzu, was a great Persian scholar. Born at Akbarabad, he served in Gwalior before migrating to Delhi and later to Lucknow. He championed the cause of Urdu in his time.

As a child you didn't have  
 Such pomp and vain glory  
 Now that you are grown up  
 Have you become a big man?

★

She untied her gown-band  
 And, thus, vanquished my heart:  
 Look, my darling captured  
 How openly this fort!

Each morning it rises  
 To be your equal, my dear!  
 How daring of it  
 But even the sun has its day.

•

Seeing your black tresses, my heart  
 Does with great mirth resound,  
 Like over a mirror's rose-garden  
 Dark clouds hover around.

*Ghazals*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazal

NAJMUDDIN SHAH MUBARAK ABROO

NAJMUDDIN SHAH MUBARAK ABROO (1683-1733) was born in Gwalior but moved to Delhi. He was influenced greatly by Vali. He wrote ghazals, masnavis and descriptive poems.

It's dawn and she is up and awake  
 So lush in early hours  
 Her negligee emits the scent  
 Of over-night flowers.

•

These are dark days for hapless lovers  
 Don't look down upon their fallow tone  
 Since pure gold is that which is put  
 To test on a black touch-stone.

•

O Abroo, you have first to learn  
 That love is a Gordian knot  
 Once trapped in the curls of tresses  
 The heart is forever caught.

•

As soon as her eyes met mine  
She merged into my soul.

•

That doe-eyed cast a hot glance  
And set my heart ablaze.

•

Abroo was dying of separation  
She showed her face and revived him.

•

A precious gem is jeweller's pride  
So is Abroo's<sup>1</sup> verse his honour.

*Ghazals*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazals

### MIRZA JAN-E-JANAN MAZHAR

MIRZA JAN-E-JANAN MAZHAR (1699-1780) was born in Kalabagh as the son of Mirza Jan of Aurangzeb's court. He was a great mystic and wrote both in Persian and Urdu. He greatly influenced the young writers of his time. He was sometimes criticised for his Persianized diction. He was killed by a fanatic.

Her caravan waylaid by the bloom  
She left the bower's pale  
In the garden, alas, there remains  
No trace of the nightingale.

What pleasures of living we would have  
O unfulfilled desire!  
The garden, the flower, the keeper  
If only they were ours.

1. Abroo, the poets pseudonym, means "honour".

My heart bleeds for the nightingale  
 On the poor bird's homelessness  
 Who abandoned her cosy nest  
 For the flower's whimsy grace.

•

It is mirth of bloom everywhere,  
 And I have shunned the wine.  
 Alas, the spring goes unavailed;  
 What to do, the fault is mine.

•

For God's sake  
 Don't hinder him, prithee?  
 He is the only slayer left  
 Now in the city.

*Ghazals*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Verses

### TEK CHAND DEHLAVI BAHAR

TEK CHAND DEHLAVI BAHAR (1687-1766) was a great Persian scholar and lexicographer. His lexicon *Bahar-e-Ajam* is accepted as a very authoritative work. His Urdu verses are found only in some accounts about contemporary poets.

1

All the caged nightingales  
 Lament and tell me  
 There is no hope this spring  
 Of your release.

2

Bahar sets out barefoot  
 On the path of love  
 The wasteland is full of thorns  
 Let us see what happens.

*Shers*, 17th-18th century

*Tr.* by Irfan Siddiqui

## Sorcery of Eloquence

MIR GHULAM HASAN

MIR GHULAM HASAN (Mir Ghulām Hasan, 1735-1786), generally known as Mir Hasan, was born in Delhi and died at Lucknow. His father, Mir Zahak, was a poet and humorist. Mir Hasan wrote ghazals and mathnavis, but lives as the author of *Mathnavi Sehr-ul-Bayan*. No other mathnavi surpasses Mir Hasan's in appeal. His simplicity is an asset and his lines have passed into the language as popular sayings.

The following is a selection from mathnavi *Sehr-ul Bayan*, where the prince Be-Nazir comes to the house of princess Badre-Munir and they fall in love with each other at first sight.

He came to a strange and unknown place  
 With a comely garden full of grace,  
 Where stood a mansion tall and white,  
 Brighter than the moonbeams' light.  
 The moon itself shone bright and fair,  
 And cool the breeze with winter near.  
 So charming was the place that he  
 Went up the roof and leaned to see  
 Below around the year if there  
 Was a living soul somewhere.  
 So wondrous was the sight he gazed  
 Upon that he was all amazed.  
 On one side tall trees full of grace  
 Stood like lovers in embrace,  
 And there he hid among the leaves  
 As does the moon behind the eaves.  
 A company was gathered there  
 (As charming as the atmosphere)  
 Of lovely ladies fine and fair.  
 Winsome and beyond compare.  
 There flowed a stream with waters bright  
 Like sheets of glass in bright daylight,  
 And lovely fountains and cascades  
 Played, and pearls of water sprayed  
 Upon an ornamented throne  
 Beside the water, under the moon,  
 Sat the queen of grace herself,  
 Leaning on cushions like an elf.

Of age she was but fifteen years,  
 In loveliness without compeer.  
 About her stood attentive maids  
 Like stars around the moon displayed.  
 She sat adorned with precious stones,  
 Gazing wistfully at the moon,  
 Up in the sky the moonlight gleamed,  
 And on the earth her beauty beamed.  
 And as their shadows fell upon  
 The stream, in each ripple two moons shone.  
 Her fair face seemed the moon's own self,  
 At which a painting would itself  
 Be wonder-struck; such perfection  
 Of white rose in her complexion.  
 Her mien was sober, full of grace,  
 Of all the charms a meeting place;  
 Her eyebrows curved like perfect arches,  
 Bending like two graceful branches.  
 Her looks and eyes seemed seats of evil,  
 Lashes that could armies fell.  
 Her nose was so unrivalled, fine,  
 Nature herself had drawn the lines.  
 Her cheeks were so soft that they blushed  
 With passing thoughts of a kiss with rush  
 Of blood; her feet were fair, shapely,  
 Her limbs a lover's fantasy.  
 Enticing was her graceful gait.

From *Sehr-ul Bayan*, 18th century

Tr: by Ahmed Ali

## Ghazal

CHANDRA BHAN BRAHMAN

CHANDRA BHAN BRAHMAN AKBARABADI ( ? - 1773) was probably more a Persian writer than a writer in Urdu. But ghazals such as this one given below indicate the nature of his poetic concerns as well as the decline in the quality of social life.

What sort of a city God has thrown us into:  
 No beauty, nor Saqi, nor flask nor cup of wine is there.

How can the garden of these pretties bloom, O friends  
No rose, nor violet nor lily nor tulip is there.

I want to keep remembering my beloved's name but how can I?  
No string, nor beads nor band nor rosary is there.

I see strange means of lover's execution for the sake of the dear one.  
No spear, nor sabre nor dagger nor javelin is there.

Brahman has lost his way in search of a holy dip  
No Ganga, nor Jamuna nor river nor torrent is there.

*Ghazal*, 18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## A Couplet

RAJA RAM NARAIN MAUZOON

RAJA RAM NARAIN MAUZOON (18th century) was one of the poets who in their writings denounced the British for their imperialist projects. One of his most well-known couplets is given below. It is the only piece of his that has come down to us.

You do know, gazelles; recount  
Of the death of lover insane  
When the loony died at last,  
What happened to the wasteland?

*Doha*, 18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## The Karbal Story

SYED FAZL-E-ALI FAZLI

SYED FAZL-E-ALI FAZLI (18th century) is the author of *Karbal Katha*. It is an abridged translation of *Rauzat-ush-Shohada*. As the earliest-known Urdu prose work, it is a remarkable achievement from the point of smooth narrative flow. Here and there poetic passages are interspersed.

And so the revered Imam travelled, from one staging place to the next, until he reached Thailaba. There, placing his head on his sister Zainab's lap, he fell asleep. Suddenly he became awake and tears spilled out of his eyes. His two sisters cried out, "Brother, our life, what hap-



pened? Why the tears? May God that we never see you cry." The revered Imam said, "I just now saw Grandfather in a dream. He wept as he spoke to me. He said, 'Husain, the time has come for you to join me.' Then I saw a horseman. He stood before me and said, 'You're going forth, but your death follows you.' This startled me from sleep. And Grandfather's tears made me cry too." Then Zainab and Kulthum and all the other women of the noble household also began to cry. Next morning they departed from there and travelled from one staging point to the next, until one evening the entire party got lost and strayed far away from the track. The revered Imam, may peace be upon him, wandered in distress that entire dark night; he didn't know which way to turn until morning arrived. Woe to me! Then the charger of the innocent and persecuted Imam reached a terrifying place and stopped. It wouldn't move, no matter how much the revered Imam used his whip. Then the revered Imam asked, "Does anyone know the name of this place?" One man said, "Ard-e-Mariya." Another said, "Ard-e...." The revered Imam said, "Perhaps, it has some other name too." Then someone said, "It's also called Karbala." Woe to me! "Allah is Great!" said the innocent and persecuted Imam. "Verily, this is that land of pain and misery, the place where my blood shall fall. It is the ground where those who were sheltered by the Prophet in his robe will be killed." Then Ali Akbar humbly said, "Venerable father, what ominous words you speak!" The revered Imam said, "Father's life, I speak the fact, not an ill omen, for I was here previously in the company of your grandfather, the revered Ameer, may peace be upon him. On his way to the battle of Saffain, the revered Ameer, may peace be upon him, dismounted here and rested, placing his head in the lap of my brother, Hasan. I too sat down by his side. Suddenly he woke up, crying. Brother Hasan asked, 'Father, what happened?' He replied, 'I saw in a dream that a river of blood was flowing through this wilderness and that my Husain was thrashing in that torrent, but no one was coming to his help.' Then he turned to me and said, 'Husain, if some calamity befalls you here and no one responds to your cries for help, what would you do then?' I humbly said, 'I'd remain patient and reconciled, father, and won't seek any other remedy.' He said, 'Yes, you do just that, for the reward for patience is great, and God is the companion to those who remain patient and reconciled.' Therefore, father's life, go, unload the camels and set up our tents." Then the revered Imam dismounted. The moment his feet touched the ground of Karbala, the ground turned yellow, and a cloud of dust rose and covered the hair of the innocent and persecuted Imam.

## A Prose Tale

MIR MOHAMMAD HUSAIN A'TA KHAN TAHSIN

MIR MOHAMMAD HUSAIN A'TA KHAN TAHSIN (18th century) is the author of *Nau Tarz-e-Murassa* (1775) which tells the story of the four dervishes in the tradition of *dastan* or prose romance. Born in Etawah in Uttar Pradesh, he travelled by boat to Calcutta during his wanderings. Its decorative and fashionable prose made his work popular.

### 1

Meanwhile, one of these four dervishes made the nightingale of his tongue sing in the garden of expression like this: O sincere friends and trustworthy comrades, we four reached here, distraught and forlorn because of the upheaval of treacherous times and the vicissitudes of circumstances. But all praises be to the mercy and compassion of Allah, our luck favoured us and the evening of our solitude has now been illuminated by the light of mutual company. Since presently the long dark night has shackled us with sleeplessness, in order to pass the night, let each of us open the lock of his tongue with the key of complete and truthful description of his life's story, so that we may mutually benefit fully with our auspicious meeting.

### 2

As the tresses of night's damsel fell down to her loins and people were in deep slumber, a wooden box came down from the top of the rampart, like a sun descending from the horizon. This humble servant was bewildered by this strange sight and started wondering if it was an illusion or God Almighty had mercifully sent some hidden treasure for this hapless one. After a while I moved from my place, brought that box to a corner and opened its lid. To my utter surprise, there lay a fairy of a damsel inside the box, severely wounded and unconscious, whose radiating visage was the envy of the sun and the moon.

### 3

After some time, the queen wanted the cup of wine. I filled and served. She gulped down the wine. As she handed the cup back to me, I kissed her hand and fell down at her feet. She threw up her hands and said: "O dunce of a man, what evil did you find in the great icon that made you

worship an unseen God?" I replied: "O Queen of all the pretty dames, I worship God since He created a flower like you in the garden of this world and made me a captive of your glory. And as far as your great idol is concerned, what is it but a carved-out stone, lifeless and senseless, whose worship can be of no use in this world or hereinafter. If you worship the Real Lord and Creator, and come on the right path, you will realise what effect God's worship makes."

From *Nau Tarz-e-Murassa*, 18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## A Prose Tale

MEHR CHAND KHATTRI MEHR

MEHR CHAND KHATTRI MEHR (18th century) is the author of the prose romance *Nau Ain-e-Hindi* or *Qissah-e-Mahmood-o-Geti Afroz*, (1788). It is written in a style simpler than earlier romances.

### 1

Once during the rainy season, he was, as usual, resting in his palace when suddenly a dust storm set in and fierce winds awakened him. A little later, as the storm subsided and the winds stopped, the king heard a woman wailing and crying: "I go now. Is there someone who can keep me?" As the king lay in his bed, he heard the same voice two or three times. Coming out of his bedroom, he went up to the roof top of his palace to know where the voice came from. Looking from the roof top, he saw Zarivand standing on the ground with a bow and some arrows in hand. Thin showers were pouring. In the flash of lighting, Zarivand also saw someone up there on the palace roof.

### 2

It was a unique garden which surpassed even paradise in its beauty and bloom. The entire courtyard was covered with golden flooring and the golden walls were decorated with such pictures made up of pearls, rubies, jade and emerald that the master artists of China would fail to copy them and Mani and Behzad would bite their own hands in frustration. On all the four corners of the garden, jugs made of ruby and diamond filled with wines of various colours were arranged on boards of crystal. Nearby, wine-cups of ruby were placed on tables of gold and they sparkled. In short, the

whole garden was so beautifully decorated that even the houries of Paradise would keenly desire to witness it. Fairy-like dames in exquisite apparels were positioned, at various spots and they showed their charm and coquetry. Having enjoyed these spectacles, Farkhund Shah directed his attention towards the pool of roses:

When he visited the garden  
Every nightingale was singing  
Everywhere, the garden was full of  
The fragrance of blossoms.

From *Nau Ain-e-Hindi*, 18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## Selections

### MIRZA MOHAMMAD RAFI SAUDA

MIRZA MOHAMMAD RAFI SAUDA (1713-1780) was the greatest name in the Urdu Qasida (eulogy) and Hajv (satire) poetry. As a lyrical poet, too, he is at times comparable to Mir and Dard. His *Shehr Ashob* (The State of the Realm) remains one of the best pieces of satirical verse in Urdu. A close contemporary of Mir, Sauda is often compared with him. But the worlds of the two are far apart. Sauda is a man of the earth, not involved in mysticism. His approach is direct and diction more suited to the expression of formal sentiments. Sauda enriched the language by introducing new verse forms and coined many expressions. Sauda could express intricate thoughts admirably and explain the subtleties of a subject. Eight poems and a prose passage are given below.

#### 1

Like Summer's first rain-drops are the candle's waxen tears;  
From head to foot a garland of pearls the candle wears.  
The travellers have no need to walk the road to death;  
The candle travels each night in the chandelier.  
Now that Beauty claims nor kingship nor empire,  
Wherefore should a crown of gold the candle wear?

Tr. by Ahmed Ali

#### 2

To what unfriendly lands  
Have gone those friends of old

Whom my eyes are still  
Longing to behold?  
Although both heaven and earth  
I paid away as prize,  
Yet cheap for that price  
Were my beloved's eyes.

*Tr. by Ahmed Ali*

3

The life of the Spring, O saqi, extends  
But to a rose's smile;  
So fill the cup, O cruel one,  
And fill it up with wine,  
For years I laughed and wandered in  
And out the halls of life,  
Now I could lay me down and weep  
Away this life of grief.

*Tr. by Ahmed Ali*

4

What Jamshed could not see  
In his revealing cup  
That we in a drop of wine  
Behold eternally.  
Of no concern to me  
Is faith or idolatry;  
Whether mosque or temple,  
It's all the same to me.

5

I well remember, Sauda,  
The wantonness of those eyes:  
Take from me the cup,  
I reel, I fall, I die.

*Tr. by Ahmed Ali*

6

How can your playful ways, my love,  
 The heart's affliction understand?  
 Can ever the plight of the hunted bird  
 The falcon understand?  
 My state in grief and shame last night  
 To you and you alone is known;  
 The secret of the moth's sad heart  
 The candle knows alone.  
 Oh, do not ask me how I fare:  
 Hold your tongue and let me live!  
 Who knows that I might say something  
 Mischievous, and you may grieve.  
 O Sauda, do not read this verse  
 Before that poet Mir, for he  
 Can never appreciate my style  
 Nor wit and subtlety.

*Tr. by Ahmed Ali*

7

Incongruity of the Age;  
 Satire on a Miser's Horse

Ever since the heavens took a dappled horse  
 For mount, the hand that holds the reins has rest  
 Nor peace; and they who had till yesterday  
 A thousand Arabs and best steeds of Iraq,  
 Ask cobblers to mend their shoes on credit today.  
 It's not adversity alone that makes  
 Man abject, but miserliness. I have,  
 For instance, one among my friends whose name  
 Once mentioned at dawn is sure to bring to him  
 Who utters it misfortune and bad luck.  
 Although his pay is a hundred rupees a month  
 He owns a horse most mean and contemptible,  
 For whom, like a child who owns a horse of clay,  
 He keeps nor food nor grass nor vet nor groom.  
 In leanness and lack of strength unparalleled,  
 Untold the days it has in hunger spent.

No more than hoof's imprint is it, and once  
 It squats it will not rise before it dies.  
 With lack of food its state is such that if  
 Its rider goes out riding in the street,  
 The butcher comes and says: remember me;  
 The cobbler that he too is a candidate.  
 And when it sees the stable or nose bag  
 It starts to paw the ground and digs in truth  
 A well. With hunger no strength to neigh is left;  
 And if it sees a mare with fright it frets  
 And farts; so weak that it would surely fall  
 With a gust of wind if the bamboos of its stall  
 Were not so strong nor flesh, nor bone, nor food  
 Within its belly; and it breathes as blows  
 The bellows of an iron-smith indeed.  
 With scabies so discoloured that not one  
 Can say it is dappled, chestnut, bay.  
 On every wound flies swarm; and that is why  
 To all and sundry it is known as gray.

18th century

Tr. by Ahmed Ali

## 8

## The State of the Realm: A Satire

Look, you fellows who are here,  
 Young or old, don't ever claim from now  
 that you have a tongue in your mouth—  
 I have heard 'great Sauda's discourse.  
 My God! What organization, what flow!  
 I just asked him, "Sir, be pleased to say  
 if there is any way to survive here  
 in minimal comfort?"

He said, "Better be quiet, man; even  
 angels can't answer this question.  
 What can I say? Today there are  
 hundreds of ways to earn one's bread.  
 Here is a brief account.

"If you acquire a horse, and serve  
 in some grandee's cavalry, then

by God, your pay will be paid in  
the Upper World. And in the Qazi's mosque,  
dwell donkeys: young and old just wait  
for the Mulla to give the call for prayer;  
and when he calls, they gag him and say  
'Shut up, you lout, there is no muslimness now.'

If the Preacher intervenes, they slap  
him, and if by chance they get hold  
of the sermon speaker, then it is kicks  
and punches all the way.

"Asses bray in God's house  
all night and day; no talk of God,  
no prayer, no prostration, no call  
to prayer by the muezzin.

"And if one became a noble's companion  
Well then that chap's life is pure hell.  
The grandee keeps late hours and  
his lackey, heavy with sleep, must sit  
before him, obsequious, silent.  
Don't ask what befalls him when he  
is hungry: he counts the toll of the bell  
as the hours pass, and his empty stomach  
rumbles with the wind. He yawns  
and yawns, drowsy, his mouth dry  
as an arrow's tip, and body bent  
like a bow.

"For a hundred rupee or two a month, if one  
were to serve as a rich man's physician:  
Let the patron just sneeze and he glares  
at his tame doctor. He calls for a bow  
and arrow to ward off even the hint  
of a breeze. When the Navab eats,  
his doctor's blood pressure goes up.  
The patron hogs all sorts of things and if  
his belly aches as a result, then God  
help the doctor; even if he were  
Avicenna, he would be declared a fool.  
"In short, they don't hire doctors.  
They hire soldiers to fight with death.



"One could be a merchant, but  
 the problem is, what you can sell  
 in the Deccan can be bought  
 in Ispahan alone. Every morning you worry  
 about the journey ahead; every evening  
 you rack your brains over loss and gain.

"And what can I say to you about  
 him who becomes resident representative  
 of a great man from out of Delhi?  
 He sits on his saddle cloth  
 in front of every noble's gate and asks:  
 'Mr Usher, dear Mr Usher, where  
 is your master gone?'  
 He needs to spout forth in every house  
 like a fountain; in every street  
 he needs must run like a stream.  
 At the P.M.'s, at the Q.M.G.'s, at the Master  
 of the Household's he has to be  
 everywhere, a Kanhaiya among the Gopis.  
 He keeps changing his word from day to night,  
 His tongue wags like a peepul leaf.

"And these poets, who, it is said, don't give  
 a damn—Well, if you want to see  
 Anxiety, and worry, just look at them.  
 If the poet goes to the great mosque  
 to offer prayer on Id day, why then  
 the real idea is to present a poem of praise  
 to the puissant Khan. Night and day  
 he racks his brains for a chronogram  
 to mark the birth, the moment he learns  
 that the Khan's lady is pregnant. And if  
 she miscarries, he writes an elegy  
 so sad that Miskin the elegaic poet  
 is eclipsed and forgotten.

"Should you be a tutor, then your pay  
 is two rupees a month, provided you  
 have mastered the Masnavi of Rumi.  
 By day you coach the boys,

by night, do the accounts of the house  
 (if you know how to, of course!)  
 On top of it all, your pupils, full of  
 mischief, make your bed a bed of thorns.  
 "For peace and comfort should one take  
 to Sufism, his fate is then to become  
 a laughing stock for the poets—  
 they compare his turban's end  
 to a donkey's tail, the turban itself,  
 to a dome. If in ecstatic dance at songs  
 divine, he shouldn't keep time, they say  
 'How silly, to be out of step!' And if  
 he moves to time, they say, 'What  
 the hell! is it ecstasy, or a nautch-girl's dance?'  
 "Forsaking the world, and trusting in God  
 if you sit at home, the wife believes  
 you to be an idle, feckless dude;  
 Your son is sure in his heart that you  
 are in your dotage; your daughter  
 thinks, 'The old man is mad, for sure.'

And if you were to command a rank  
 of seven thousand horses, don't delude  
 yourself with hopes of the soul's bliss.  
 Look at the great Hafiz, Lord of Katehar;  
 Mighty guns like Lightning-Thunder  
 and Tiger's Jaw burn his breast  
 every day.

"Rest and quiet are but a name  
 in this world; though some say  
 they can be found in the world above.  
 Yet none are prepared to bet on it;  
 Imagination more than fact  
 is at work here, and anyway—  
 Alive, on earth our worry is how  
 to make a living. Dead in the grave,  
 one worries about the day of judgement.  
 Rest and content are mere words,  
 they exist neither here nor there."

## A Preface

The conscience of the mirror-bearers of meaning realizes that it is only by God's grace that the tongue is capable of speech. I record these lines written in Rikhta on paper, therefore, to consign them to the audition of connoisseurs of poetry in order to win their acclaim for ever.

The value and worth come only from those who know  
Otherwise, there are no fewer pebbles in the river than pearls.

The content (of a text) within the mind is nothing but a caged bird. When it is expressed by the tongue, it is a nightingale's song for the ears of those who can discern. In short, the subtly meaningful beauty of this poetry calls for justice only from those endowed with the valuable gift of fair speech. If God has created this humble poet to blacken the face of paper, He has also gifted men's minds with the light of reason. Criticism, if any, should be fair and sensible and avoid undue acrimony which might be fatal. There is no doubt that even the great masters of the past may have committed mistakes since to err is human. But men of perception know that if a little fake gold comes out of the bag of a millionaire, it is nothing serious, but if some such counterfeit thing is recovered from the purse of a goldsmith, he would not be spared. It is, therefore, essential for a sensible person to relate the meaning to the word with perception so that the benefit of speech is not lost. Sheikh Sa'adi says:

First is thinking, speech afterwards  
Feet come first and then the wall.

One should not go beyond his limits while speaking about an art of which he is not a perfect master. The speech of an ignoramus before a scholar leads to humiliation while silence is equal to hundreds of scholarly qualities.

If you know how to talk, keep silent  
Hundreds of the facets of speech are hidden in the silence.

It may be known that the gems of this humble poet's speech have adorned the ears of the masters for the last forty years. His sophistication and subtlety of speech have been well-known all through. In spite of that, he has always acted upon the saying "take the pure and leave the impure",

and has given careful thought and due attention to the reactions of all. If a true and just word has been said even by an enemy, this writer has taken that in the spirit of "whoever teaches you a word is your master".

This writer, however, has found elegy to be the most difficult of all the forms of poetry, since it expresses one single subject in thousands of styles... while writing an elegiac poem the position of the person concerned should be kept in mind and it should not be composed just for the sake of the common man's wailing.

From *Deebacha-e-Sabeel-e-Hidayat*, 18th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## Ghazals

### SIRAJ-UD-DIN AURANGABADI

SIRAJ-UD-DIN AURANGABADI (1715-1763) was born at Aurangabad and spent all his life there. He was the author of several ghazals and of the masnavi *Nazm-i-Siraj*. His poems show the influence of Hafiz. In his ghazals the mystical coexists with the physical. Like Vali, he was a poet from Deccan who left a deep mark on the ghazal in Urdu, but in his outlook he was very different from Vali.

The following are some of his ghazals:

•

I offered up my life on her altar, how good, and how proper!  
I became the dust of her road, how good, and how proper!

•

It has been a long time, and love's secret wasn't revealed to me  
Now that secret is open, how good, and how proper!

•

Fresh "scar"—flowers are in bloom in the garden of my heart  
Now here's springtime again, how good, and how proper!

•

In the fire of your love, fair one, my heart  
Was finally quick silvery restless, how good, and how proper!

Pleasures ruled the realm of the heart so far  
Now it is under the rule of pain, how good, and how proper!

•

The wild deer of my heart ran free in the jungle of reason,  
Now it is caught in your tresses, how good, and how proper!

•

My idol-like beloved, my heart always dwells upon your eyebrows  
It's the Brahman's job to worship always at the temple.

•

The moon-pheasant<sup>1</sup> will surely say "This is my heart's desire";  
For the full moon of beauty's sky lights up the whole world<sup>1</sup>

•

God made you king of beauty's realm  
Hear the call of the poor; give alms: let them have a sight of you!

•

It stood up so manfully to the arrow-showers of separation,  
My suffering heart is indeed the champion of love's battle.

•

Mr Pious, if you with unclean breast were to take the air on the river  
The sun's bright reflection would sink to the depth of the water.

•

Where are you going, you of magical eyes, Oh you, down there!  
Listen to me, taker away of the heart, Oh you, down there!

•

---

1. The moon-pheasant is supposed to be in love with the moon.

The heart's nightingale is singing away without you  
Don't be so neglectful, you of flower-dress, Oh you, down there!

•

I have grown frail and thread-thin  
Come to me quickly, Oh you of thin waist and delicate body,  
Oh you, down there!

•

Narrate my tale to Majnun, and tell him  
I too am homeless, you homeless are, Oh you, down there!

•

Don't be such a sour piss  
Smile a little, you sweet of tongue, Oh you, down there!

•

My killer called out to me lovingly  
Oh Siraj, Oh slaughtered one with bloodied shroud,  
Oh you, down there!

•

I saw my beloved face to face  
I must have been dreaming, I know.

•

What wonder! dark by day  
and the sun by night  
I have seen.

•

In the book of beauty  
your stature—  
Like a line chosen  
for its elegance I have seen.

•

My education is now complete  
I read from the book  
of self-less ecstasy.

•

Ever since it became the camp  
of Love's battalions. I see  
my heart-city  
ravaged.

•

Oh Siraj, in the fire of love  
my heart burns away  
like roasted meat over-done.

•

Listen to the news of love's wonder:  
The madness of love  
Didn't last, nor did the fairy-beloved.  
Neither you, nor me remained,  
All that remained was utter absorption.

•

The Lord of ecstasy now granted to me  
The dress of nakedness  
There's neither reason to sew  
Nor madness to tear away  
The veil.

•

A wind blew from the unseen  
And what a wind! The garden  
of delights withered away—  
But a little twig of the tree of pain  
(Let's call it the heart)  
Remained green.

•

What a moment that was

The moment when I learnt lessons  
from the book of love—  
The book of reason that was  
on my shelf, remained there,  
forgotten.

*Ghazals*, 18th century

Tr. by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

## Ghazals

### KHWAJA MIR DARD

KHWAJA MIR DARD (1719-1785) was the son of Khwaja Muhammad Nasir Andalib. As a writer of ghazals, he used simple and colloquial language to write about love and mystical experience. In addition to ghazals, he also wrote a treatise on mysticism entitled *Ilm-ul-Kitab*.

A few of his ghazals are given below :

Even in the realm of non-being  
I had no peace, restless  
like ripples on the surface  
I am illusory river.

•

People of pomp  
are truly destitute—  
The sun glitters like a stream,  
but is waterless.

•

For those who fall by the wayside  
death comes as relief:  
The footprint is like an unwinking eye,  
Sleep comes to it only  
when it is effaced.

•

It's improper for the shallow-  
hearted to drink:



The bubble—full of air—can't be  
a wine glass.

•

Those whose spirit is high  
are never shaken;  
The wine can do nothing  
to make the cask  
lose its footing.

•

I came into this world  
and looked every way  
I saw only you.

•

Wherever you cast a full glance  
Bodies were emptied of the soul.

•

Lamentation, pleading, sighing, weeping  
I did all I could do, dying a thousand deaths  
My Messiah's lips  
utter didn't a word.

•

I saw Dard today  
A lover he is, and then save!

•

I play the game of love  
with my life at the stake; look  
at my mettle. I may live or die  
but I'll keep looking  
toward her.  
She whose face  
is bright as the sun, is always  
before me, yet

I could never look at her  
full in the face.

•

Even that much, cruel sky<sup>1</sup>  
you didn't permit for more  
than a moment: all that I had was nothing but  
a stare, a glance.

•

O faith and fidelity:  
speak to him who doesn't know  
such things. Hey it's me  
you're talking to. Look at me.

•

O Lord, I know all about  
the ultimate end of the heart's  
lamentations. Okay, let not your heart  
stint its desires. Let it weep.

•

Although there's no road  
but the one that leads to you,  
no one seems to know this;  
such a pity!

•

He is a few more steps above  
the level of gnosis  
My friends what you believe  
to be God, is not God.

•

All this play of creation  
is by and due to man alone;

---

1. Conventionally, the sky is man's enemy.

There's no game possible  
on a kingless board,

•

You say: it's he  
who shows the path, and he  
who leads astray –  
Why, then everyone is  
on the true path.

•

O Dard, mirror-like; seek Him  
within your self; for outside  
the door, there is no road,  
no traveller.

•

O friend, do go and tell her  
my complaints; do somehow go  
and tell her about me.

•

The more she cuts me dead  
the more I feel like accosting  
her, teasing her and getting  
an earful from her.

•

I resolved a hundred times,  
I won't see her any more.  
But it never works, ever.  
Oh what should I do with her?

•

So you dislike and despise me?  
Okay, you are the boss  
Meet only those with whom  
there can be the meeting of the hearts.

I told you so, Dard  
Go easy on love, man  
Now you got chastised, didn't you?  
Go on, show some more devotion.

*Ghazals*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

## Ghazals

### QIYAMUDDIN CHANDPURI QA'IM

QIYAMUDDIN CHANDPURI QA'IM was born in Chandpur. He spent a good part of his early life in Delhi where he became established as a leading poet. He left Delhi around 1760 and was employed at the court of the Nawab of Tanda. In about 1780 he settled at Rampur in UP where he died. Qa'im was a man of wide learning and could make creative use of his erudition lending an air of scholarly authority to his poetry.

This is the season of flowers; do not try to save your collar.  
Instead, just for once, do what the springtime demands of you to do.

Qaim, step with care into the alley of love.  
The path is hazardous; so, be cautious, my dear.

My heart and soul bear the same wound of your glance.  
I could not know which one was the actual target of that arrow.

The ways of the world are similar to the waves of the sea.  
I did not see again what once I had seen.

How I repent that I sent him to the place of my love.  
O God, let my messenger come back; I forgo the news from there.

My heart found comfort under the locks of her hair and stayed there  
The derwish camped wherever the evening came unto him.

See my luck! where did the climbing rope give way;  
Just when the roof was at an arm's length from me.

Our usual haunt is such a place that even an angel  
May get his wings burnt if he passes from there.

Though with a worn-out net,  
We catch the phoenix, O bird-catcher!

Let's move, Qaim; it is long  
Since those who are gone wait for us

Is it possible for a floating straw to resist the wave? It is;  
I and your wish, dear, take me wherever you will.

Tears! do not keep on asking me for the blood of my heart;  
In this abode of a fakir now it is here and then it is not.

We wandered and wandered in this wilderness full of mirages;  
But then, alas, we found out the water hole was always a step  
or two from us.

In the exaction of pleasures by our ancients we suffered misery.  
The wine was gulped by others and we got only the agony of craving.

*Ghazals, 18th century*

*Tr. by Naiyer Masood*

## Ghazals

### INAMULLAH KHAN YAQIN

INAMULLAH KHAN YAQIN ( ? - 1755) was a poet of Delhi who was unfortunately killed at a tender age by his irate father. He was a close disciple of Mirza Mazhar, and a noted ghazal poet of his time; his collection consists of about 170 ghazals.

There is no colour in the songs and tunes of a nightingale,  
Which does not happen to be caged in the season of flowers.

It is all right that the heart burned itself out,  
It was better consumed this way. What use the fare which draws  
no buyers?

Now, Oh now, just a glance of love to serve as provision,  
For the journey this patient is going to undertake in a moment.

Life is wasted in lamentations, and nothing follows,  
It is a wrong notion that wailing has its effects.

There is no place for love except in the slit of a wounded chest;  
A house which has no open door is a house which has no air.

I want to embellish my bosom with the embrace of yond beauty in yellow  
For I wish to rhyme this measured line in my own verse.

What that body would have been like,  
The unknotting of whose robe-string perfumed the finger nails  
like rose petals!

*Ghazals*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Naiyer Masood

## Two Poems

### MOHAMMAD SHAKIR NAJI

MOHAMMAD SHAKIR NAJI ( ? - 1747) was patronized by Nawab Amir Khan Anjain, who was earlier a member of the Delhi Court. He wrote ghazals, couplets, qasidas, etc.

#### 1

Should the beloved, of her own accord,  
agree to grant favours,  
even the devil would fall in love,  
and behave like a man.

Only such a one should look at herself  
in a mirror admiringly—  
the colour of whose face should make  
the wine glass in her hands  
glow even better than a *pari*.

With such fine stature, dear beloved,  
Were you to go walking in the garden,  
Even the cypress should stand before you  
erect like a slave.

Naji, whoever polishes the heart's mirror bright  
would rule the kingdom of love  
like Alexander.

*Ghazal*, 18th century

## 2

For one who is lost in thoughts of a bright face—  
The sun is just like a sunflower.

*Doha*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Mehr Afshan Faruqi

## Ghazals

SYED MOHAMMAD MIR SOZ

SYED MOHAMMAD MIR SOZ (1721-1798) was the son of Syed Ziauddin. Leaving Delhi he first went to Farukhabad, then to Faizabad and Murshidabad and finally to Lucknow. Like his father, he was also interested in archery. He specialized in a simple kind of ghazal marked by colloquialism and stylization.

## 1

It fell in love, or became  
a captive, or was ensnared  
by toil and trouble?  
I don't know what happened to my heart  
in the twinkling of an eye.

You made me the target of your cruelty:  
God bless you, my fault was just  
that I fell in love with you.  
I find no clue—  
Where should I look for my crazed heart?  
Where is it lost?  
Oh, what happened to it?

## 2

If only my beloved were to keep faith—  
O dear God, what fun!  
It is just my self-control  
that keeps the tears in check,  
Or there would be a flood by now.

3

If you would just let me  
I would kiss your feet  
so stealthily  
that even the henna wouldn't know.

4

Clouds have barred the angels' way;  
It's proper today to do  
sinful deeds.

*Ghazals*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Mehr Afshan Faruqi

## Ghazals

BAQA

The following are ghazals by the poet Baqa (18th century).

1

She looks at her image in the mirror and says,  
Good God! how charming!  
Baqa, and I am the one who can look at her!  
Good God!

2

With what desire, the wine-glass kisses  
you when you drink!  
And with what ardent desire  
I kiss the wine-glass.

3

The flood of my eyes  
keeps it ever desolate,  
The city of my heart  
is situated between rivers.



4

There's nothing for me to do  
 but to long and sigh from afar;  
 The pleasure of kissing and embracing?  
 Well, her modesty knows it best.

5

Because of my tears and my sighs—  
 Water and fire surround me  
 like the burning candle.

*Ghazals*, 18th century

*Tr.* by Mehr Afshan Faruqi

## Ghazals

### SHAH ZAHORUDDIN HATIM

SHAH ZAHORUDDIN HATIM (1700-1783) was one of several Urdu writers who started a new literary tradition in the 18th century. He consciously set to standardise the *divan* along new lines. His *Divanzadah* is a landmark. He gave up the excessive use of *iham* or pun. His popular work *Shahr Ashoub* reflects social conditions of the time.

1

He is not hidden  
 He is present everywhere  
 But we don't have the eye  
 To witness Him.

2

He is separate from no one  
 Just find out for yourself  
 He is in close proximity  
 Yet unique in Himself.

3

Now get up, O traveller  
 You have a long way to go

The drum beat of departure  
Is sounding incessantly.

4

One who sets sail from this world  
Becomes a fathomless ocean.

5

Wise men run from this world  
As quicksilver from fire.

6

This gem of wisdom  
I fondly treasure:  
That to live without you darling  
Is sheer wastage of life.

7

Her beauty captivated me  
Her tresses helped in the act  
Well, catching heart without a trap  
Is really an art!

8

O the wise men,  
Your wisdom for you!  
For us, the desert, the frenzy  
And the madness will do.

9

Why devastate  
Hatim's joy-land of heart  
O my city O my people  
Do you like only a desert?

## Ghazals

### MIR MOHAMMAD TAQI MIR

MIR MOHAMMAD TAQI MIR (1722-1810) is arguably the greatest Urdu poet. Orphaned at an early age, he moved from Agra to Delhi and came under the tutelage of the great scholar Sirajuddin Ali Khan-e-Arzu. Mir soon struck out for himself among the intellectuals and poets of Delhi. A passionate love-affair led to a nervous break-down. He led a life of uncertain vicissitudes in Delhi. He compiled in Persian a pungent biographical dictionary of Urdu poets as well as his first collection of Urdu poems around 1752. He moved to Lucknow in the 1780s where he was patronized by Asifuddaulah, Navab of Lucknow and his successor. He died at Lucknow in 1810. Although Mir's poetry is quite medieval in its assumptions about man and the universe, his voice immediately engages the modern mind with its vigour and vibrancy. By virtue of its wide range of themes and moods and tones, his poetry finds a response in the heart of even the most sceptical reader. Equally at home in the experience of the body and the mind, and in full command of all the imaginative spaces from mystical power to libertine bawdiness, Mir can rightly be described as "surprising with a fine excess". He is the most "metaphysical" and also the most "earthy" among all Urdu poets.

What follows is a very small selection from his six collections of ghazals.

1

You are makers of poems, don't  
be silent, now  
silence takes away lives,  
Speak. Recite. Narrate  
some poems to us.

2

How long does a blossom last?  
I wondered, aloud.  
A budding bloom heard me,  
and smiled.

3

You composed poems such  
as to warm the hearts  
of those who have a soul.

Mir, you should now do  
something such  
as to make them weep,  
and sad, and keep alive  
your memory.

4

What the hell.  
should there not even be  
loss of reputation  
total devastation?

Is it love then  
if it doesn't result  
in blackening one's name  
even so little as this ?

5

Love had killed off my honour  
anyway. Why, what could I  
have done, if I  
didn't kill myself?

6

I placed a curfew on my longings  
when there was no strength left in me.

This city was  
brought under good management  
only after it was stripped of everything.

7

A composition, as it were,  
of crushed rose petals—  
Her body when it glows  
her blouse wet  
with perspiration.

## 8

Let me now put my neck against your sword of cruelty;  
 come what may, I don't give a damn.  
 I have now made up my mind about it;  
 come what may, I don't give a damn.  
 Why this oozing drop by drop? Confront the raincloud  
 some day at last, burst into showers, O my weeping eye;  
 come what may, I don't give a damn.

Am I about to move away from your street like the  
 night-dark cloud? Never!  
 Let arrows be showered on me or swords rain down;  
 come what may. I don't give a damn.

Once you become involved with someone like yourself,  
 You'll no longer lord it over on us, ma'am  
 Then, kindly lady, it's contumely and loss of face for you;  
 come what may, nobody will give a damn.

For how long should I be the suppliant? I am now  
 determined to wrest from her what's mine by right;  
 come what may, I don't give a damn.

## 9

I asked, is there  
 any sign at all of love's  
 wanderers?  
 The morning breeze  
 picked up a handful of dust  
 and hurled it into the air.

## 10

Did anyone at all pay heed  
 to what the road said?  
 We pushed ahead  
 mindless, like the caravan's bell  
 a noise issued forth from our lips,  
 it wasn't conversation.

11

When Mir's night-long weeping and  
head-bashing availed him nothing,  
he curled up like a foetus  
and resigned himself to sleep.

12

Sleeping the sleep of negligence,  
I didn't value them well  
and now they're gone.  
My eyes opened only when  
those companions and those gatherings  
became a dream.

13

Love is the orderer and composer of all things,  
as if it were a well-versed poet,  
setting in well-measured symmetry  
all that was created.

Love is the Occult of this Apparent world—  
Occult or Apparent, all is love.  
At one end love is the world above  
And at the other, it is here and now.

Love circumambulates and rules the world.  
It occupies all the space there is—  
It lies hidden in the heart somewhere,  
and is somewhere quite manifest.

With its waves surging up to the sky  
and all its deeps the breeding ground for tempests  
Love is that grand ocean  
which is everywhere in tumult.

14

Love rolls around the earth and the sky.  
It fills the four directions.

I am a slave at love's court;  
for me love is God.

Apparent and Occult, first and last,  
Above and below, love is all.  
Light and dark, real and unreal,  
Love is become all this on its own.

Incompatible love, O Mir, is  
a bitter pill, all the way—  
With a congenial lover  
Love is pleasure, love is jouissance.

15

I'd dry someone's brimming  
eye at least, if my shirt  
had a sleeve.  
How embarrassing  
to be empty-handed.

16

People do grind themselves  
into the dust of the street, for love's sake  
but not like you, O Mir!  
There you lie, in open road  
with half your body buried in dirt.

17

My breast burns with the anguish  
of love through night and day.  
God! wasn't there any place else  
for you to bury this fire?

18

I didn't live long enough  
for her to make good  
her promise to me.  
Life didn't keep faith with me.

19

Dying is  
an occasion of dread  
and doubt;  
we're strangers to travel,  
and the road  
is amazing rare.

20

How to subsist  
in this world of ends and means?  
All my baggage fell off  
somewhere on the way to here.

21

In the beginning of love  
I was fire, and now  
I am dust, and ashes.  
So this is the summit, and the crown.

22

It seems to me that spring has come  
and flowers are in bloom in grove and forest.  
From under the red scars of madness  
a bit of blackness glimmers through.

People mistake my humility for arrogance,  
and bear malice against me;  
It is just a chance, what can I say?  
Such chances do happen in the world.

I didn't suffer the rigours of separation.  
I do agree with whatever may be done to me—  
Burning by fire  
or being dragged into the ocean's deep.

23

Driven to desperation, I say:  
"I won't live in this flower garden anymore";



The bulbul says, "Please, a few more days  
for the rose's sake."

What can he know of the taste  
of sweet faces, and the spring?  
The bulbul never saw a thing  
but the rose.

It *was* praise for her lips  
at the tip of my pen, O Mir,  
or the bulbul had in his beak  
the petals of the rose?

24

Going away  
from this confining world,  
just like a prisoner  
being led to the execution.

25

The heart is not a kind of city  
to be repeopled.  
Look, I tell you,  
you'll regret pulling this place  
to pieces.

26

His body daubed all with ash,  
and eyes like earthen lamps—  
that twisted-matted-haired yogi,  
the gaze just couldn't stay on his face.

27

I could never enter upon  
the pleasure of her body—  
My regard was always  
for her soul.

28

Source of my life, please listen—  
close fitting dress is cruelty:  
your body has the elegance  
and the grace of the soul.

29

Her arms entwined around me,  
Nightly she sleeps with me in the nude,  
And yet she is so bashful  
That she never appears unveiled  
Before me in the day-time.

30

Direct the inner sense to the world's noise:  
Behind every voice is the same  
Loquacious eloquent maker  
of speech.

Enter, image-like, in whatever form  
you please. This world,  
like the mirror, is  
an open door.

31

The beloved of the imagination  
has one great merit, Mir;  
Contrary to other beloveds,  
this one's permanent home  
is in my heart.

32

I never had my fill of sleep  
before I died.  
There wasn't  
room enough in the world's defile  
to stretch my legs at full length.

33

So what's the use of meditating,  
 asleep to the world?  
 Open your eyes, look:  
 what seasons, what scenes, what landscapes!

34

Luck, devotion, weeping, money, power:  
 Dammit, the lover has to have something!

35

The world is a gaming house, Mir;  
 Existent here is the same  
 as non-existent:  
 Enter here, cast your very first die  
 and lose your self for sure.

36

If I knew someone  
 who is in your confidence, Lord,  
 I'd surely ask him, was it  
 playfulness? Why did the Lord God  
 take it into his head to hurl,  
 into confusion and overthrow,  
 the world's pleasure assembly?

*Ghazals*, 18th-19th century

Tr. by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi

## Seven Poems

### MIR INSHAULLAH KHAN INSHA

MIR INSHAULLAH KHAN INSHA (1752-1817) spent his early life in Murshidabad, Delhi and Lucknow. He was a great scholar and knew many languages. He was a master of lyrical expression. He also displays his sense of humour in his ghazals. Some critics consider him to have indulged in frivolity. He was unconventional in his writings. His ghazals are marked by wit and realism.

1

My heart is constant and of Him  
Alone can sing.  
What need have I to bow my head  
Before a king?

O saqi, this indeed is joy  
That wine can bring,  
That you and I both drunkenly  
Should dance and sing.

2

O saqi, hold my hand awhile;  
I've come to such a pass  
I know not where I go,  
I cannot hold the glass.

O morning breeze, if you are by chance  
In the friend's company,  
Relate what you have seen—  
My plight in captivity.

3

Turn your face and look  
Into the mirror that's wise:  
Of all that you are proud .  
Are these eyebrows and eyes.

Brief is your life, O candle,  
It runs not into years;  
And all your pride and glory  
Are these few drops of tears.

4

No news whatever came of those  
Who went away;  
Whither does this caravan  
Wind its way?

Then wherefore should one carry this  
Burden, O friend?  
It's not so long a way to wend  
To oblivion.

5

Alas, the days of youth fly past  
Like shadows cast  
By hurrying day;  
With every minute we fade away.

6

Away, away, O breeze of the Spring,  
Why dally? Go your way;  
I'm filled with sorrow and despair,  
And in no mood for play.

Many and many a friend has gone  
Beyond Time's beck and call;  
And those who still remain, alas,  
Will follow one and all.

My dreams soar up to heaven, my head  
Rests at saqi's feet;  
Lost in other cares and filled  
With woe the drunkard sits.

Like faint footprints of passing feet  
In the alley of desire  
I'm left no strength to walk or move  
Or even the will so stir.

I've lost all patience, fortitude,  
Pride, and self-respect,  
Though not without a fight; for each  
Of them I've cried and wept.

But then, the sorrows of the world  
Allow no peace or rest;  
Yet, Insha, be consoled that still  
A few old friends are left.

The billows in love's stormy sea  
Rise and fall;  
The boatman warns no land's in sight,  
The shore is far.

Then wherefore, Insha, should one build  
His trust on life?  
Wake up, idlers, the voyage is long  
And full of strife!

*Ghazals*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Ahmed Ali

## The Gipsy

VALI MOHAMMAD NAZIR AKBARABADI

VALI MOHAMMAD NAZIR (Vali Mohammad Nazir, 1735-1830) was a very remarkable figure in Urdu poetry. He was a great realist and has described various facets of human behaviour most vividly in his poems. He wrote about people's joys and turbulations. In an age of the ghazal, he was a notable writer of long poems.

Do not be greedy, wander not from land to land,  
The thief of death robs day and night with both his hands.  
Of no avail are bulls and camel-loads entire  
Of wheat and rice and pulses, peas or smoking fire;

For when the gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

If you're a merchant with influence and wealth too,  
Forget not there's merchant far more rich than you.  
Of what use sugar, coconut and salt and sweet,  
Raisins, ginger, chillies, saffron, cloves, and meat?

For when the gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

With loaded bullocks, bulls, you visit East and West;  
You'll either make more money, or you will lose the rest.

Nor finery, gold, nor lace, nor silks and ornaments,  
Nor gilded horses nor your well-decked elephants;

For when the gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

Be not proud of all your swords and shields and spears;  
They will run for very life when the face of death appears.  
As heaps of treasures; boxes full of diamonds, pearls;  
The best of brocades and the most expensive shawls;

And when their gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

You plan strong homes, the pillars of your flesh are weak;  
Erect high forts where grave pits come to gape and reek;  
Build domes and turrets, moats and unassailable walls,  
Forts and castles, carts and cannons, powder, balls;

But when the gipsy move his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

Why wander then in search of profit all the while?  
Forget not an enemy follows at your heels;  
No nanny, nurse, or slave or pupil, friend will care,  
Nor temple, mosque, nor garden help, nor well nor weir;

And when the gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

When death will drive your body's bull with whip a-crack,  
Some then will take your goods, some sew your bag and sack,  
Then you will rot in the grave to dust all, all alone,  
And not a soul, Nazir, will think of you, not one;

For when the gipsy moves his tent  
Pride and glory and the rest  
Will not avail nor all your best.

## Ghazals

### YAHYA AMAN JURAT

YAHYA AMAN (Qalandar Bakhsh) Jurat (? - 1819) wrote ghazals with a pronounced human appeal. Some critics have considered him too erotic. He became blind in early life, yet his sense of merriment was irrepressible. He was popular with young readers. The pathos of his poetry is perhaps related to the decline of Moghul power in Delhi.

We tell the tale of her tresses tonight;  
 What a night, what a night, what a night, O God!  
 Her hennaed hand she showed and stole my heart:  
 What a hand, what a hand, what a hand, O God!  
 Her breasts have grown to youthful heights;  
 What a bosom, what a bosom, what a bosom, O God!  
 Whoever heard Jurat's ghazal, said wow!  
 What a thing, what a thing, what a thing, O God!

•

How distraught and love-lorn  
 I wander here and there  
 When I recall her buxom bust  
 And jasmine-like colour.

•

I may not go back there  
 When I return from her lane  
 But it is my frenzied heart  
 That takes me there again.

The grief has made  
 My heart so unsound  
 That in my own house  
 I scurry around.

•

I asked a hundred questions  
 She listened and kept silent  
 So, I can't even grouse  
 That I got a negative reply.



The sky keeps revolving  
 How can one enjoy a drink  
 Well, it already looks like  
 An upturned cup of wine.

The boat of my cherished desire  
 Was about to get ashore  
 Just then the winds started lashing out  
 And the river began flowing upstream.

She was to begin reading my verses  
 In a collection of lyrics  
 Just then a gust of wind, Jur'at,  
 Turned over the page.

*Ghazals*, 18th-19th century

Tr. by Irfan Siddiqui

## The Assimilation of Love

SYED HUSAIN SHAH HAQIQAT

SYED HUSAIN SHAH HAQIQAT (1773-1833) was the author of the famous prose tale *Jazb-e-Ishq* (The Assimilation of love).

It happened in 1204 A.H., during the reign of Shah Alam Ghazi at Someri, a township adjoining the township of Jhata in the area of the Bindraban division; and my respected brother Syed Muhammad Hasan Shah, the one who is aware of all facts and truths, brought this beauty of a story in all its elegance to the assembly of prominence in the attire of flowery Persian words. One day, with the utmost exalting affection, which is always bestowed upon the younger by their elders, he, in his wonder-working words, asked this humble and faithful one to present the lovely face of this romance with a new look and new ornamentation in Urdu prose to the gathering of friends. Submitting to his command which had to be obeyed and in pursuance of his binding command, I am threading the pearls of my thought in several strings and setting them in simple yet colourful and attractive prose. I have named the narrative "The Assimilation of Love" and inserted glittering couplets of my own and other master-poets in conformity with the requirements of the story and the demands of the description in the text.

The dispirited girl, losing hope of her union with that heart-snatcher,

went, with her three confidants, up the roof of her mansion, the height of which mocked the mount Alwand, in the scorching heat of noontime and, in expectation of a glimpse of him, looked on desperately:

The eyes relished the sight  
But the tongue was incapable of speech:  
Such was the power of her gaze  
That she was stationed here and her stare was reaching him.

And she seemed to be murmuring this couplets:  
Whom should I tell of my ill-fate:  
As soon as our hearts met, heaven induced separation.

When her sweet-heart  
Was completely out of sight  
The day turned black to her eyes like night;  
The faithless lover vanished,  
And she collapsed on the earth in a swoon.

In the meantime, through one of those happy coincidences a good-looking and good-natured youth, who was proceeding towards the same army camp, happened to pass from below the loft; and all of a sudden he looked up. And what he beheld was that three dames with faces dazzling like the sun were shedding tears of pity on the deteriorating condition of a fairy-like girl who was lying like some picture painted on the floor.

To his eyes that blooming beauty came easy like a moon  
Nay, not moon, like a sun at the zenith of honour and dignity  
But, alas, the grind of grief had reduced her  
From full moon to a crescent.

3

When that "head-staker" saw his helpful companion got caught in the hands of those filthies; he, with a broken heart and apprehensive of his own captivity, drew his blood-sucking sword out of its scabbard and, like some lion ravaging a flock of sheep, attacked each of those targets of his rage. Wherever he struck with a war-cry, those back-turners scattered and split like moss.

Wherever he raised his arm  
The opponent's severed head fell at his feet.  
And anyone whose head his tempered sword contacted, the edge cut

through his body as a wire would cut through a cake of soap, and sliced the doomed foe in halves like a green cucumber. Well, how far should I go on writing, in short,

Wherever his sword operated  
It rendered ones into twos and twos into fours.

But then, by a bad stroke of luck, a cruel and black-hearted coward came from his back and hit with a cudgel aimed at his head, but, by the will of God, the cudgel struck at the sword and the sword broke into two pieces.

*Jazb-e-Ishq*, 18th-19th century

*Tr.* by Naiyer Mas'ood

# Glossary

## Assamese

<i>Ankiya Nat</i>	Dramas written by Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva.
<i>Bargit</i>	Songs composed by Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva.
<i>Buranji</i>	Chronicle.
<i>Charita</i>	Biography.
<i>Charitra</i>	Biographical narrative.
<i>Charyapada</i>	Doha's composed by the Buddhist monks of the Bajrajana fold.
<i>Chaupaya</i>	Quatrain, a metrical form.
<i>Git</i>	Song.
<i>Jikir</i>	Songs composed by Ajan Pir, a Muslim saint.
<i>Katha</i>	Prose.
<i>Kavya</i>	Narrative in verse.
<i>Kirtana</i>	Collective religious singing from the scriptures/To sing in praise of God.
<i>Nataka</i>	Play.
<i>Namghar</i>	Prayer Hall.
<i>Pada</i>	Metre with fourteen units.
<i>Satra</i>	Vaishnava monastery where the Head of the Satra who is called Satradhikara, lives with his disciples.
<i>Shloka</i>	Sanskrit 'sloka' (verse).
<i>Stuti</i>	Prayer.
<i>Tadbhava</i>	Assamese words originating from Sanskrit.
<i>Tatsama</i>	Sanskrit words in Assamese.

## Bengali

<i>Baul</i>	Singing mendicants, composer of mystic songs.
<i>Charita</i>	Biography, Hagiography.
<i>Charyapada</i>	Buddhist mystic songs.
<i>Gan</i>	Song, music.
<i>Gitika</i>	Lyrical ballads.
<i>Kadcha</i>	Diary.
<i>Kavigan</i>	Impromptu songs and repartee made by poetasters.
<i>Kaviwala</i>	Poetasters.
<i>Kirtan</i>	Songs in praise of Radha and Krishna.
<i>Manasa</i>	Goddess Manasa, daughter of Siva.

<i>Mangalkavya</i>	Folk epic, folk narrative.
<i>Abhayamangal</i>	Narrative poetry in praise of Abhaya, that is, Durga.
<i>Annadamangal</i>	Narrative poetry in praise of Annada, that is, Durga.
<i>Chandinangal</i>	Narrative poetry in praise of Chandi, that is Durga.
<i>Dharmamangal</i>	Medieval epic in praise of Lord Dharma, deity of Dharma cult.
<i>Govindamangal</i>	Narrative poetry on Govinda, that is, Krishna.
<i>Kalikamangal</i>	Narrative poetry on Kalika, that is, Durga.
<i>Manasamangal</i>	Narrative poetry on Manasa.
<i>Pada</i>	Song.
<i>Panchali</i>	Doggerel, narrative poetry and song.
<i>Payar</i>	Bengali metre with 14 syllables in each line.
<i>Purana</i>	Sanskrit narrative poetry containing history, mythology, society, genealogy of Gods, rishis, kings and creation and dissolution of the universe.
<i>Samvad</i>	News, encounter.
<i>Skandha</i>	Chapters or cantos of Puranas.

## Dogri

	A ballad composed in praise of a warrior.
<i>Bhakh</i>	An ancient style of singing still prevalent in rural areas of Jammu Province.
<i>Bhaktikal</i>	A period of Indian history when Bhakti movement held a sway over India.
<i>Chhandas</i>	Rhyme scheme.
<i>Dogre</i>	A term used for Dogri script also known as Takari.
<i>Gatha</i>	A ballad or a legend in verse.
<i>Geetrhu</i>	A kind of dance songs mostly romantic, prevalent in Jammu Hills.
<i>Harani/Herani</i>	A refrain commonly used on 'Lohri' songs.
<i>Kalanji</i>	Incantation recited by Muslims.
<i>Karaka</i>	A devotional ballad.
<i>Kashas</i>	A clan of Shaka tribe that entered India in 7th century B.C.
<i>Lohrhi</i>	A festival celebrated to commemorate the death of a mythical demoness called Lohita.
<i>Mantra</i>	A mystical verse.
<i>Pandvani</i>	A class of folk songs wherein exploits of Pandavas of the <i>Mahabharata</i> have been explained.
<i>Parhina</i>	A witch doctor.

<i>Ramaini/Ramenī</i>	Song sung during the ritual of Gysettan by Gurahi class of bards.
<i>Ritikal</i>	A period in Hindi literature when a large number of poets tried their pen on romantic subjects.
<i>Trothaka</i>	A kind of Dogri folk songs, sung in a peculiar style.
<i>Paharhi</i>	A dialect of Dogri language.

## Kannada

<i>Anubhava Mantapa</i>	(The hall of experience) The gatherings of <i>sharanas</i> (Lingayat Saints held in Basavanna's Mahamane (Great House) where spiritual matters were debated and poems composed.
<i>Bedagu/Bedagina</i>	Kannada counterpart of 'twilight' language (Sandhabhasha) and (inverted language), (cesttiabhasha) deliberately obscure. Style sometimes employed by saint poets. One of the meaning of the word is 'puzzle'.
<i>Desi</i>	Non-classical, folk style as opposed to margi, classicism.
<i>Hadugabba</i>	Song compositions by Shaivite saints. Also called <i>Swaravachana</i> ( <i>vachanas</i> for singing).
<i>Jogula</i>	Lullaby.
<i>Kandapadya</i>	A four-line Sanskritic metre based on equivalence of letter combinations.
<i>Kathana</i>	Narrative composition as opposed to <i>vachana/geeta</i> (prose-poem/song).
<i>Kirtana</i>	Hymns to Vishnu composed by Vaishnavite devotees (Haridasas).
<i>Margi</i>	Opposed to 'desi' (See above).
<i>Mundige</i>	Song compositions by Vaishnavite poets which employ a <i>bedagu</i> -like style.
<i>Pada</i>	Song.
<i>Ragale</i>	Long narrative poems centring around the lives of Shaivite/Lingayat saints. The form was introduced and perfected by Harihara.
<i>Sandhabhasha</i>	Kannada counterpart of 'twilight' language (Sandhabhasha) and (inverted language), (cesttiabhasha) deliberately obscure. Style sometimes employed by saint poets.
<i>Sangatya</i>	A four-line folk metre perfected by the Jain poet, Ratnakara Varni.
<i>Shatpadi</i>	A six-line verse-form widely employed in narrative poems by medieval Kannada poets. Introduced by Raghavanka and perfected by Kumara Vyasa.

<i>Padayani</i>	A performing art form of the folk variety, popular in southern Kerala; forms part of the tradition of Kali worship.
<i>Pama</i>	A form of Kali worship, accompanied by folk songs and folk dance.
<i>Pattu</i>	That branch of Malayalam poetry which derived inspiration from Jamil poetic tradition, with the dominant presence of Jamil vocabulary.
<i>Ramanattam</i>	Precursor of Kathakali; deals with the Rama theme following the pattern set by Krishnanattam.
<i>Sitankar Jullal</i>	See <i>Jullal</i> .
<i>Stotram</i>	Devotional song.
<i>Jottam Pattu</i>	<i>Jottam</i> derived from <i>Stotram</i> ; ritualistic folk songs, mainly dealing with Kali worship.
<i>Jeyyam</i>	<i>Jeyyam</i> derived from <i>Daivam</i> (God); mainly a form of Kali worship; combinatin of ritualistic dance and music.
<i>Jiyyatu</i>	Ritualistic fire-worship, mainly dedicated to two folk deities, Ayyappa and Kali.
<i>Jullal</i>	A solo dance form in which the narrator and the dancer are one and the same; deals with epic stories in a popular folk style., Three main varieties – <i>Ottan Jullae</i> , <i>Sitarkan Jullal</i> and <i>Parayan Jullae</i> , classification based on the performers costumers and the tempo of rendering songs.
<i>Vanchippattu</i>	Boat songs, usually sung on the occasion of boat races by boat men.
<i>Itihasa</i>	Epic poem such as Ramayana and Mahabharata.
<i>Kaikottikkali-ppattu</i>	Songs sung on ceremonial occasions and festivals, such as Onam by groups of women along with rhythmic body movements.
<i>Samkhak-kalippattu</i>	An elaborate ritualistic art form, prevalent among the Nampoothiri Brahmins of Kerala.

## Manipuri

<i>Ahonglon</i>	Ritual song describing the festivities observed during the successive reigns of the Meitei kings.
<i>Anoirol</i>	Song sung in dance to the accompaniment of the stringed musical instrument called <i>pena</i> in Lai Haraoba festival (festival in honour of the Lais or gods). It describes evolution of dance in different ages.
<i>Charit</i>	Behaviour, acts, life.
<i>Chingoirol</i>	Old Manipuri manuscript dealing with different hill ranges of Manipur.

<i>Hijan Hirao</i>	A moving account of felling of a tree for construction of a royal boat by two skilled artisans of the king. Hongnem Luwang Ningthou Punsibe of Manipur (C. 7th century A.D.). This is sung in Lai Haraoba.
<i>Khencho</i>	Ritual rhythmic song sing in Manipuri Lai Haraoba by male singers.
<i>Khungum</i>	Literally to go to village, as in <i>Charairongba Khungum</i> (Charairongba's going to villages).
<i>Kumdamshie</i>	Song of the season.
<i>Laron</i>	Account of the plantain leaves.
<i>Leiron</i>	Song of flowers.
<i>Mei</i>	Fire.
<i>Ningthourol/</i>	A ritual song sung for destruction of a country.
<i>Ningthouron</i>	Account of kings.
<i>Ougri</i>	Ritual songs sung in Lai Haraoba festival. These are also sung on certain occasions for prosperity of the Kingdom or destruction of another.
<i>Pana/Pena</i>	Pana is an administrative unit. Whereas Pena is an indigenous Manipuri stringed instrument.
<i>Payar</i>	Fourteen syllabic poetic line with a ceasure in the middle.
<i>Puran</i>	Ancient books, scripts.
<i>Sane Lamok</i>	A song sung at the invocation or welcome of Pakhangba.
<i>Shibika</i>	A handbook on astrology.
<i>Sherbika</i>	A handbook on astrology.
<i>Wari liba</i>	The Manipuri art of story telling.
<i>Yakairol</i>	Song sung to awaken the gods and the kings in the morning.
<i>Yakeiba</i>	Invoking the gods or kings.

## Marathi

<i>Abhang</i>	A hymn, a lyrical poem meant to be sung, written in a particular metrical form which has a folk origin.
<i>Atmcharitra</i>	An autobiography.
<i>Ashtak</i>	A group of eight (songs etc.).
<i>Bakhar</i>	An account of various contemporary events; a narrative of historical events by a knowledgeable, trustworthy competent person generally written by orders of a king or a master.
<i>Bharud</i>	A synthesis of folk-songs and folk-drama, presented by a single actor singing and enacting at the same time a poem with <i>double entendre</i> .



<i>Bhupali</i>	A song meant to be sung in the early morning by a devotee of a particular God, with intention to wake him up.
<i>Dhavala</i>	A devotional song, describing marriage ceremony particularly of Shritrishna and Rukmini, sung at their ritual marriage ceremony.
<i>Drishantpatha</i>	A story or an anecdote told metaphorically by Shri Chakradhar with a view to explain some religious principle.
<i>Gavalan</i>	A dramatic song put in the mouths of cowherd girls or women expressing mock complaints about Krishna's mischiefs, having inner spiritual meaning.
<i>Katha</i>	Katha or Harikatha is an episode taken from an epic or a Purana for narration by a performer of a <i>kirtan</i> .
<i>Kirtan</i>	An exposition of some religious principle by a learned performer with narration of a <i>Katha</i> accompanied with singing of songs.
<i>Lavan</i>	An erotic song in folk tradition, meant to be sung and enacted before an audience.
<i>Ovi</i>	A metre in particular form having folk origin.
<i>Pada</i>	A devotional song.
<i>Powada</i>	A dramatic poem describing heroic deeds meant to be sung before an audience.
<i>Sutrapatha</i>	Utterances of Shri Chakradhar in cryptic ways of some philosophical principle or giving some command for conduct of his disciple.
<i>Teep-granth</i>	A word by word commentary on some Mahanubhava scripture.
<i>Upakhyan</i>	A sub-plot in an episode, i.e. <i>Akhyan</i> .

## Nepali

<i>Bharat</i>	India, sometimes India and Nepal.
<i>Charitra</i>	Life-story.
<i>Khandakavya</i>	Short epic poem.
<i>Magal/Mangal</i>	Auspiciousness, bliss, benedictory song.
<i>Nandi</i>	Chorus, Shiva's bull.
<i>Pahadi</i>	Hilly, mountaineous, an appellation of Nepali language.
<i>Panchaka</i>	A group or collection of five.
<i>Parva</i>	Festivity, division of book (esp. that of Mahabharata).
<i>Prashnottari</i>	Catechism, question and answer.
<i>Purana</i>	Hindu mythology.
<i>Ritivadi</i>	A mode of literary expression; amorous writing.

<i>Sadhukkadi</i>	Language used by Nepali saints which is generally a mixture of Hindi and Nepali.
<i>Samvada</i>	Dialogue, conversation.
<i>Sarga</i>	Chapter of an epic.
<i>Shloka</i>	Metrical composition of a poem.
<i>Stuti</i>	Prayer, invocation.
<i>Vedanta</i>	Hindu philosophy based on Upanishads, theology.
<i>Virkal</i>	Heroic-age, chivalric period.

## Rajasthani

<i>Anktik</i>	Pertaining to the spoken word; rules explaining and elaborating grammar and syntax.
<i>Badhawa</i>	Song of welcome; song sung on auspicious and ceremonial occasions.
<i>Itar Kavya</i>	Refers to story, miscellaneous verses.
<i>Charit</i>	Life story; Biography, especially in verse.
<i>Chaapai</i>	In prosody, a metrical stanza of 4 lines having 15 "matras" each, ending in rhymes of a long, followed by a short sounding letter(s).
<i>Chaupai</i>	Same as above, except that its lines are of 16 "matras" each, having rhymes ending with two long sounding letter(s).
<i>Dava Vait</i>	A special style of Rajasthani prose with sentences ending in rhyme.
<i>Dingal</i>	Language of literature especially poetry in Rajasthani. Now the term is generally used synonymously with Maru Bhasha and Rajasthani.
<i>Doha</i>	In prosody, a couplet – short poem of two lines, with a definite meter, ending in rhyme.
<i>Duha</i>	Same as <i>Doha</i> .
<i>Gaccha</i>	Any of the sub-sects of the Shvetambar Jain Sadhus; sometimes named after the places where they flourished.
<i>Git</i>	A Dingal poem in special meter and rhythm, with lines ending in rhymes, 72 types of <i>Gits</i> have been enumerated in <i>Raghunath Rupak</i> by Manchha Ram.
<i>Hal-ahval</i>	Detailed news; information about prevailing conditions at any place.
<i>Khayal</i>	"Tamasha"; popular folk drama with rustic poetry, song and dancing for the amusement of village audiences.
<i>Khayat</i>	Book of history, briefly recording events, even legends of popular belief.

<i>Kundaliya</i>	In prosody, a stanza of six lines begining with a Doha of two lines, followed by four lines of the "Rota" meter.
<i>Maru Bhasha</i>	Old name of the language of Rajasthan, evolved out of Apabramsh; now the term is used as a synonym of Rajasthani.
<i>Pachisi</i>	A set of 25 items such as stanzas or tales etc.
<i>Pavade</i>	Folk poems, extolling folk heroes, worshipped as folk deities – their deeds of wonder and bravery and glory are sung before village audiences.
<i>Pingal</i>	Prosody, the science of versification, including the study of meter, rhyme etc. It also refers to the language used for Braj Bhasha verse.
<i>Pravad</i>	Episodes of remarkable deeds noted and commemorated usually in verse.
<i>Ras, Rasa and Raso</i>	(These terms are often used synonymously) A poetic composition giving the story of an outstanding personality, usually dealing with love, romance, battle or renunciation. <i>Ras</i> , however, is quite different from <i>Ras</i> , <i>Rasa</i> or <i>Raso</i> mentioned above. It occurs on page 461 of <i>Medieval Indian Literature</i> , Vol. I, where it denotes any of the various moods predominating a literary composition, which brings forth <i>Vir Kavya</i> , <i>Shringar Kavya</i> , <i>Bhakti Kavya</i> , etc.
<i>Sandhi Kavya</i>	In long narrative compositions the work is usually divided into Cantos or Books; and there are shorter chapters inserted in between, which, so to say, join the context of one canto with what follows in the next ones. Such short chapters are known as <i>Sandhi Kavya</i> . ("Sandhi" literally means a-joining). By and by, however, any sort of brief compositions have come to be loosely spoken of as <i>Sandhi Kavya</i> .
<i>Samvad</i>	Dialogue.
<i>Saptika</i>	A set of seven items, just as "Pachisi" is one of 25 (see above).
<i>Sar Kavya</i>	Laudatory verses; poetry of praise.
<i>Shringar Kavya</i>	Poetry of the erotic mood.
<i>Soratha</i>	In prosody, a couplet or a two-lined poem, quite similar to Doha, except that the rhyme in the <i>Soratha</i> comes in the middle of the lines instead of at the end as in the Doha.
<i>Subhashit</i>	A "quotable quote", usually a couplet or a short stanza – well spoken on any suitable occasion in apt context.
<i>Vachanika</i>	A composition in praise of any heroic personality, partly in prose and partly in verse.
<i>Vat</i>	A story or a tale, written in prose, interspersed at places with an occasional verse or two.

<i>Vir Kavya</i>	Poetry of the heroic mood.
<i>Bidst Kavya</i>	Derogatory verses.

## Sanskrit

<i>Akhyayika</i>	Prose romance based on some historical facts.
<i>Anyapradesha</i>	Onomic poetry.
<i>Bhāna</i>	A one-act play with only one character.
<i>Charita</i>	Story (of).
<i>Katha</i>	Prose romance based on speculation.
<i>Kavya</i>	An aesthetic creation.
<i>Lahari</i>	Waves (of).
<i>Mahakavya</i>	(Lit. great poetry) an epic comprising at least eight cantos.
<i>Muktaka</i>	Short poems.
<i>Nataka</i>	Play in general.
<i>Prabandha</i>	An epic.
<i>Prahasana</i>	Force.
<i>Purana</i>	Book of ancient stories dealing with the origin of creation, etc
<i>Saptashati</i>	Poetry comprising seven hundred verses.
<i>Shataka</i>	Poetry comprising one hundred (or more) verses.
<i>Shloka</i>	Verse.
<i>Stotra</i>	Hymn.

## Sindhi

<i>Arti</i>	A devotional song.
<i>Bayt</i>	A form of Sindhi poetry.
<i>Champu</i>	A form of Sanskrit prose interspersed with verses.
<i>Chaupai</i>	A form of poetry.
<i>Dahasu</i>	A poetic stanza using words from ten languages.
<i>Da'i</i>	Literature of Ismaili sect.
<i>Doha</i>	A form of poetry.
<i>Dohira</i>	A form of Sindhi poetry consisting of three to four lines.
<i>Gahun</i>	Sindhi form of poetry akin to English ballad.
<i>Ghazal</i>	Form of Persian poetry.
<i>Holi</i>	Devotional songs sung during Holi.
<i>Kabat</i>	Hindi poetic metre.
<i>Kafi</i>	A form of Sindhi poetry.
<i>Maṭāh</i>	Devotional songs in praise of the Prophet.
<i>Maulud</i>	Devotional songs in praise of the Prophet.

<i>Marsiya</i>	Dirge.
<i>Mathnavi</i>	A form of Persian poetry.
<i>Paḍa</i>	Devotional songs of Meera.
<i>Panjra</i>	Devotional songs in praise of Jhulelal.
<i>Qasida</i>	Penegyrics.
<i>Raso</i>	Biographical epic.
<i>Samvad</i>	Dialogue in poetry.
<i>Shloka</i>	A form of Sanskrit verse.
<i>Soratha</i>	A form of Hindi poetry.
<i>Wai</i>	Lyric. A form of Sindhi poetry consisting of one and a half lines.

## Telugu

<i>Champu</i>	A genre of <i>kavyam</i> (poem) in which prose and multiple metres of verses are used together. This is usually contrasted with <i>gadya</i> (prose) <i>kavyam</i> . This is the form of most of the medieval Telugu <i>kavyams</i> .
<i>Deshikavyam</i>	Literally means a native or local <i>kavyam</i> . This word is used in contrast with <i>Marga</i> (Mainstream) <i>kavyam</i> denoting a <i>kavyam</i> in the structure of Sanskrit <i>Kavyam</i> . Usually <i>kavyams</i> composed in native Telugu metres, <i>Kavyams</i> with themes of local legends, local ballads etc., and <i>Kavyams</i> with an intense use of native Telugu words are denoted by this word.
<i>Jati</i>	A figure of speech, also called 'Sahajukti'. Impressive and naturalist poetic description is denoted by this word. It has also been used in reference to naturalist description of contemporary facts in certain medieval <i>kavyams</i> .
<i>Kavyetihasa</i>	This name given in contemporary Telugu criticism to the genre of Andhra <i>Mahabharatamu</i> composed by the triad of poets Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana. It denotes the transcreation of the <i>itihasa</i> in a <i>kavya</i> form and refers to the mixture of the features of genres of <i>itihasa</i> and <i>kavya</i> in the same poetic work.
<i>Kshetramahatmyam</i>	The sacred local legend of a religious shrine, explaining, through a religious narrative, how the shrine came into existence. In Telugu literary criticism this word is used in reference to <i>kavyams</i> narrating these legends also.
<i>Purana Kavya</i>	The name given in contemporary Telugu criticism (especially by Prof. G. V. Subrahmanyam), to the genre of works like <i>Nrsimhapuranamu</i> by Errana. This refers to the mixture of features of genres of Purana and <i>Kavya</i> in the same poetic work.

- Ragada* A genre of lyrical metre, local to Telugu (and also Kannada) literature structured on the basis of prosodic feet forming according to the number of *matras* (time of a wink of eye) in a line. Also denotes a genre of devotional poetic works of eulogy, especially, in Saivite literature.
- Satakamu* Literally means a poetic work comprising a hundred mutually independent verses. But satakams usually have : 101, 108, 116 poems, on account of the beliefs of auspiciousness of numbers. A satakamu is characterized by a common end phrase, usually in a vocative form called Makutamu, and common on theme in all its verses and the subjective mode of poetic expression.
- Varta* Literally means day to day business of life. Used to focus on secular aspect of a community's life. This word is used in reference to the documentation of contemporary day to day life in medieval Telugu *kavyas*.
- Vastu Kavyamu* A word used by Nannechodudu (11th century A.D.) in his work *Kumarasambhavam*. Considered to be a borrowing from Kannada literature, this word refers to a decorative, descriptive and figurative style of narration. This word is interpreted by Prof. G V. Subrahmanyam as referring to the moulding of a *vastu* (theme, plot or content) for a religious purpose.













